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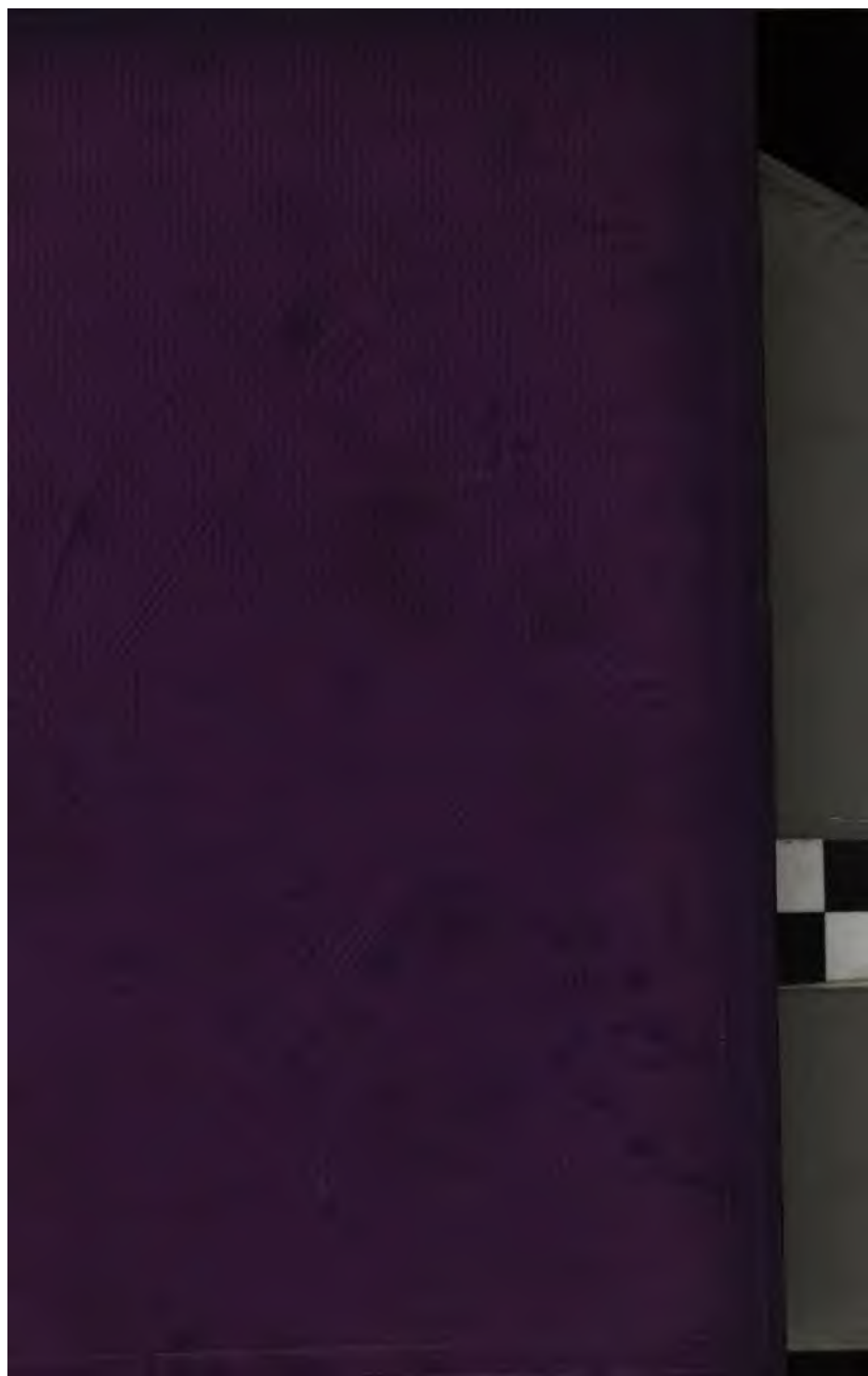
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HARRY DISNEY.

HARRY DISNEY.

In Autobiography.

EDITED BY

ATHOLL DE WALDEN.



Give me, instead of Beauty's bust,
A tender heart, a loyal mind,
Which with temptation I can trust,
Though never linked with error find.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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HARRY DISNEY.



CHAPTER I.

THE RIVALS.

'O Fame, if I e'er took delight in thy praises,
'Twas less for the sake of thy high-sounding phrases
Than to see the bright eyes of the dear one discover
She thought that I was not unworthy to love her.'

MY picture—'Portrait of a Lady,
No. 520'—was a triumphant suc-
cess. People crowded round it in
the Academy, and remarked, 'How wonder-
fully like!' The men gazed at it admiringly,
and as they reluctantly turned their attention
elsewhere, muttered, 'Lucky man, Sir John
Trevennis—begad, I shouldn't mind changing

places with him!' The *profanum vulgus* stared at it open-mouthed, as if they had never seen the portrait of a pretty woman before; and as they moved on at the bid of the policeman, Darby said to Joan, 'Well, lass, that be a fine lady, surely!' And the city gent and the little clerk stroked their scanty moustaches, and said to each other in a killing manner, 'Dem fine gal, 'Arry—a gal like that *would* be worth conquering, eh?' and then they sighed, as they thought of their own wives—married people are always discontented. My name was bandied about all over the town, and every one at dance or dinner, when hard up for conversation, said, 'Have you seen Lady Trevennis's portrait at the Academy? it is inimitable.' I was famous.

The critics commenced their notices of the Academy with a critique on my picture, and the unanimous manner in which their

opinions were expressed showed me how valuable was Art-criticism. One critic said that my colouring was too rich; another, that it was too subdued; a third, that the arms and the drapery of my study were perfect, but that the pose of the head on the hands was stiff and inartistic; whilst another considered the pose of the head artistic to a degree, but complained of the arms and the floating drapery; a fifth thought the outline of the face harsh, and the hair a coarse daub; whilst a sixth especially praised the softness of the outline, and said that the hair was painted with a care which Holman Hunt himself might have envied; and so on *ad infinitum*. But I paid no attention to these gentlemen, who knew little about writing, and nothing about painting. A careful article in the *Trimmer*, written by a man evidently well acquainted with Art, praised me in a very flattering manner, but

at the same time pointed out with no light hand my faults. There could be no doubt, however, that my picture was a complete success.

Had I chosen at that time to devote myself entirely to Art, my fortune would have been made. Letters from men and women of all ranks poured in upon me, desiring me to paint their portraits. But I knew that Art meant absence from Princes-gardens, and I felt no inclination to quit Lady Trevennis for the solitude of a studio. My motto was, You cannot be better than happy ; and my stay in Double Zero House was happiness itself. Mr. Faynix said that, after the marked 'hit' I had made, he could not think of my remaining his private secretary ; 'valuable as your services are to me, I must not rob Art of so accomplished a follower. Any interest I can exert for you will always be a pleasure to me.' But I replied that I

had no intention of pursuing Art as a profession, and that I should be only too glad to act still as his private secretary. 'Very well, Disney: of course I am delighted to keep you; only I do not wish, at the same time, to bar your progress in life. I dare say I shall be able to get you an appointment.* You are a Progressist, of course?' I replied that I took no interest in politics, and that I really had no decided views on the subject. Indeed, what are politics? Obtaining one's own good at the expense of the nation's?

'Ah,' continued Mr. Faynix thoughtfully, 'you should study politics—nothing more improving to the mind' ('And sometimes to body and estate,' thought I; for Mr. Faynix made a very good thing out of what he called "politics," which was only another word for office at any price. I kept my reflection, however, to myself). 'But

I hope at the end of the year to get you a commissionership of something or other ;' and he walked away.

Mr. Faynix evidently imagined that I served him only to get something out of him, and that it suited my interests better to be a secretary to a rising statesman than to be a portrait-painter. I let him remain under this impression ; and the more so as I saw he approved of my decision. Like my poor father, he did not consider Art a gentleman-like profession. 'When an artist has made a great name,' said he to me one day, 'of course society is glad to get hold of him, as it always is when a man becomes famous ; but before you'll get a great name, Disney, you'll have to work many years ; and then when society looks upon you as a *lion*, you'll forget that you are an artist, and set up for a fine gentleman—like Brown, who paints cows on the downs, you know,

whose father was a potato-merchant at Hoxton; or Jones, the fashionable novelist, whose uncle keeps the hatter's shop in Bond-street. It is always bad for a man to follow a profession of which he is ashamed. The only professions fit for a gentleman are politics, arms, diplomacy, and the bar. The church used to be; but since they have let such queer men into it—King's College men and the like—it has greatly lost its tone; the old English parson of my young days is now as extinct as the dodo. No, my dear fellow, depend upon it, there is nothing like social position. I meet every day the princes of commerce, and secretly they are ashamed—or, rather, their wives—of their calling. And quite right too; I look upon my banker or my merchant as I do upon any other class of tradesmen.'

'Really, Mr. Faynix, you talk like the most bigoted of Tories of fifty years back.

I thought you were a great advocate for knocking down all barriers of distinction, and one of the men who held that the man who gains his bread honestly is as deserving of respect as the most aristocratic of county potentates. I thought you were the friend of the people, and an enemy to all exclusiveness.'

'Yes, I like the people collectively—individually I abhor them. Their rights and wrongs are excellent subjects to dilate upon in the House or on the hustings, and make one popular. Besides, nowadays, the people vote, are zealous supporters, and are decidedly useful; and to "feel great interest in the working man," to be a "friend of the masses," are very excellent cards to play. No, a statesman who goes in for popularity can't get on without "the people." But, my dear fellow, you may talk a great deal about the people, without caring two curses

about them. I like the people politically, because they will "make me;" but socially they are a set of ill-conditioned *canaille*, and I should be, *entre nous*, sorry to see them a whit more represented than they are at present. You always find those,' laughed he cynically, 'who express the most liberal sentiments the most exclusive. Besides, public opinions are one thing, and private opinions another. You will understand this better when you get older, and especially if you ever enter the House;' and the old buck laughed, and gave me two fingers, and toddled off to his office, where he was going to meet a deputation of Dissenters, which he received, as usual, with urbanity, and dismissed with platitudes.

Lady Trevennis was enchanted with the success of my picture. 'Cousin Harry,' said she to me a few days after the conversation just related, 'you cannot tell how delighted

I am at your success. Nothing, too, could have better furthered my interests at the present time than its exhibition. Everybody is talking about it, and wondering how they could have ever compared me with Lady St. James. Deserters from my camp are returning to me every hour, and, like all converts, are now most zealous in my behalf. Lady St. James is furious, and has just given Sir Daub Marlstick an order to paint *instantly* her portrait for the Exhibition in Bond-street. Thanks to you, however, I think the Progressist party will be no longer divided, and that before the season is out I shall be its recognised leader. You cannot tell how civil the wives of the manufacturing members have been to me within the last few days. But really, I forget what I came down to say to you; I have so much now to think about, that at times my thoughts quite run away from me.'

‘I am happy that I do not follow their example,’ murmured I.

She smiled pleasantly. ‘No, you are very good. I should be so sorry to lose you; and yet it is very self-denying of you to give up your profession to be papa’s secretary. You know you might become quite a great man;’ and she looked at me admiringly, for, like all women, she respected talent.

‘I am not ambitious,’ I said, laughing; ‘and then, in addition to being Mr. Faynix’s secretary, I have the advantage of sometimes being useful to Lady Trevennis, and that is a pleasure which I should be sorry ever to forfeit.’

‘Would you? well, it is very kind of you to say so. O, yes, I remember what I was going to say. Would you mind writing to Mrs. M‘Mushroom, and saying that I wish to see her next Thursday? Ask her to come to luncheon, and say, please, that the

Duchess of Whistine and Lady Sophia will be here too. Do you remember last Saturday playing croquet at Eaton Lodge, and saying what a splendid place it would be to give a *fête champêtre*? Well, Sir John will be back next month, and we intend to give the most magnificent entertainment that ever has been seen—in fact, a *Tournament*—and I want to ask Mrs. M‘Mushroom about it; her opinion whenever it concerns the spending of money is always valuable. Are you going to do anything this afternoon?”

‘Nothing particular. I was intending to pay one or two calls in Westbourne-terrace and Sussex-square.’

‘Westbourne-terrace — Sussex-square? Where are they?’

‘O, wild uncultivated tracts about ten minutes’ drive from here. Travellers say, however, that their inhabitants are not unsociable, considering, of course, the want of

civilisation among those savages north of the Park. I should recommend your ladyship to go there some summer instead of to the seaside—the change would be so great, and do you so much good after the fatigues of the London season.’

She smiled. ‘Lady Ann would say you were a quiz. But if you have no engagement this afternoon, Mr. Faynix hoped that you would meet him at Brooks’s, and drive down with him to Hurlingham, as he is going to shoot in the match there to-day.’

I assented; and after accompanying Lady Trevennis to her carriage resumed my letter-writing, which she had interrupted.

You who knew me during my struggling days in London, gloomy and morose, can hardly imagine the change that constant intercourse with the world effected in me. I courted society now as much as formerly I had shunned it. My life was spent in going

to balls, dinners, and assisting at every reception which was attended by Fashion. At this period of my existence I was so much amongst the great, that when I spoke to some lowly commoner I thought it an act of condescension.

The more I saw of the London world, the more I remarked what a powerful influence is that of birth; and for the first time I dwelt with some pride on the thought that I was sprung from an ancient Devonshire family, and that my mother was a daughter of a descendant of one of the first batch of baronets created by James I. Sarcastic and haughty to the men, but deferential and agreeable to the women, society looked upon me most kindly. As 'Faynix's private secretary,'—the fact of my being Reggie's tutor was prudently kept in the background—and 'a relation, I believe, of Lady Trevennis's,' I was invited

everywhere. My picture tended all the more to further my interests socially. I was regarded as a 'rising young man' with a great taste for Art; and it was said that if I chose to follow Art, I could become a great artist, but that I thought such a profession *infra dig.* I was accordingly looked upon as a young man of great talent, but very proud.

My days—what with Mr. Faynix, Lady Trevennis, and little Reggie—were tolerably occupied; so that the excitement and dissipation of the evenings became a delicious contrast. Lady Trevennis was profuse in her hospitalities, and her dinners were always as well dressed as herself. As for her receptions, they were crowded as only London people can crowd together when whipped-up by fashion, and her balls were considered among the *very* best in town. Before people Lady Trevennis always affected to be a relation of mine, and treated me as


such. Having once introduced me to the gay world she left me to my devices, and I had the pleasure of seeing her constantly ; for as we both moved in the same social groove, we met very frequently. It was for those meetings that I chiefly cared for society. I thought over, when alone, every kind word she had said to me during the day, every bright smile or look she gave me, or any little thing that I had done to please her. My portrait of her gratified to the full her woman's vanity, and every comment passed upon my work she looked upon as an act of homage to herself.

My days passed most pleasantly. After 'coaching' Reggie, I invariably rode with him in the Row, where sometimes I met Lady Trevennis. In the afternoon I was engaged in my secretarial duties, or else went out driving with Lady Trevennis and Lady Ann. Sometimes Lady Ann would

ask me to come into her drawing-room, when she would talk to me very seriously ; or else I would accompany her in her visits to the poor, and hear her give sharp lectures on cleanliness and the management of infants—the latter is a favourite topic of advice, I am given to understand, amongst elderly spinsters and barren wives. I fear that the poor did not appreciate that excellent lady, with her tracts, her globules, and her advice. I believe they called her the ‘ Visitation of the sick and needy.’

My evenings, as I have said, were passed in social dissipation and all kinds of mundane gaieties. Young England and I became acquainted with each other ; we would dine together at Greenwich, smoke together in my room after one of Lady Trevennis’s receptions, lounge about together in the Park, and drive and ride together whenever opportunity offered. I found him cold, su-

premely selfish, utterly unprincipled, except where the world's code of honour is concerned; immoral enough to shock even a Frenchman; blandly indifferent to all religion—which, however, he did not ridicule, because it was bad taste, but which he did not believe, because it was worse taste; and yet, with all these grave faults, he was gentlemanlike, amiable, provided you did not put him to too much inconvenience; very generous, either with other people's money or his own; a *gourmet* in his tastes; not very careful or very pure in his language, when you came to know him better; and altogether as polished a young sinner as ever trod the downhill paths of Avernus. I certainly did not respect him, but he amused me; and I had lived—even after five weeks—long enough in the world to care only to be amused. The unpardonable sin against modern society is not, to be




wicked, but to be—dull. You see that I was not improving by my contact with the gay: was I different from others?

When I had finished writing the letters, which the intrusion of Lady Trevennis into my room had for the moment interrupted, I found that all my paper was used up. I therefore walked into the drawing-room to obtain some from the envelope-case on the writing-table, and opening the blotting-book began to write to Mrs. M'Mushroom for Lady Trevennis. Whilst writing, my attention was attracted by the impression of a letter upon the virgin sheet of the blotting-paper. Many of the words were illegible, but their formation showed me that the letter had been written by Lady Trevennis. I began to decipher what I could upon the blotting-leaf, and I read,—‘no more money impossible to send say have seen Lord Edgeware advise most strongly

..... avoid intimidation useless ;' the other words were so blurred, that I could make nothing of them. The letter, I made out, was addressed to M. le Comte de Vaudrien, Paris.

As I wended my steps to Brooks's to meet Mr. Faynix, I tried to solve who this Vaudrien was, and what was the nature of his acquaintance with Lady Trevennis ; but in vain.

Whilst passing Croesus Lodge, I saw a large crowd assembled before its courtyard. Count Lazaire de Meaux was giving one of his 'breakfasts,' and coroneted carriage after carriage set down its fair occupants before the splendid mansion. The crowd, curious and vulgar as are all English crowds, was peeping through the railings, and making comments on the Hebrew host, and on the beauty and dresses of the guests, as they alighted from their equipages.



A short dirty-looking man, dressed in shiny black, and with a most democratic-looking hat on his head, came up to me. He was slightly inebriated, and his whole appearance bespoke him to be one of those stump orators who on the Sundays speak out their minds to the masses beneath a tree in Hyde-park, and look not unlikely one fine day to be hanged upon one. On his breast was a copper medal which proclaimed him to be a 'leader of a column,' whatever that was: in his present condition, however, he was far more calculated to lean against a column than to lead one. Said this *sansculotte* to me:

'Can you tell me what is going on there?'

'O, nothing,' I replied; 'merely the restoration of the ancient people.'

A Roman Catholic gentleman, whose purple face showed that he was apoplectic,

and purple vest that he was a canon, smiled at my remark. I recognised him as Canon O'Leary, one of the most agreeable of priests that ever extracted a confession from a penitent, or legacy from a moribund. We bowed.

'Ah,' said he, 'the sceptre may have departed from Judah, and the crown from Israel; but she makes up for it by holding those of others.'

I was about to make some reply, when my radical friend, who had begun to be noisy, and to cry out, 'Down with the bloated hairystocracy! Three hisses for all olygochs! 'Urray for the people! Down with everythink, and hup with everybody!' &c., fell prostrate on the pavement from the combined effects of republicanism and liquor. The crowd cried out,

'Fetch a policeman!'

‘Have you seen a policeman?’ said a man to me.

‘My good man, I haven’t seen such a thing for the last three weeks. You had better take a train to the nearest village, and there you are sure to find one at the bar of the chief public-house;’ and I walked away.

Just then Lady St. James’s carriage passed me, and that aristocratic lady gave me the coldest inclination of her head; to which, nevertheless, I responded by the most profound bow.


Lady St. James, being a *parvenue*, piqued herself upon being very exclusive. She courted only the very great or the very distinguished, and shunned everything plebeian, as religiously as she did the memory of her father, who had died some three years ago. She affected to be very rigid in all her ideas of social morality,

and opposed in every respect to the fast tone of her day. Hence the Fossil party, the Churchmen, and many of the leaders of the religious world, rallied round her.

Lady Trevennis was far more wise in her time and generation. She knew that the tendency of the age she lived in was for the morally immoral and the properly improper; and she took care to gratify it, and to set it the fashion. She was, therefore, as opposite to her rival as possible. Lady St. James introduced high dresses; Lady Trevennis, those extremely *décolletés*; so that the wags said, that ladies' full dress was neck or nothing. Women whose necks were shrivelled, or whose collar-bones protruded, or whose shoulders were spotted, preferred the fashion of Lady St. James; whilst those whose necks and busts were models for a sculptor, and who had no objection that the body of their ball or dinner

dressess should consist only of a waistband and a camellia, 'went in' for the mode set by Lady Trevennis. The men thought the *décolleté* fashion a very agreeable introduction, and Lady Trevennis triumphed over her rival.

It was Lady Trevennis also who patronised that fascinating French actress La Villette, and thought her *double-entendres* wit, and her dancing graceful. We all know how fashionable were the audiences which crowded to listen to that charming *actrice*, and how greatly the enthusiasm about her proved that we were so much purer, so much more moral, and so much better in every way than our neighbours. Lady St. James, on the contrary, never went to see La Villette; but patronised Miss Cagmeer, the religious writer, whose mission was exclusively to convert the nobility, and who told every one that her papa's first-



cousin was the Earl of Scalemonica, and that she could have married a marquess, but that she did not so choose; for that her mission was to write the 'conversions' of young men and women of good family, to be a kind of religious leech upon the aristocracy, to tell people how very much better she was than anybody else, and to keep her name constantly before the public. Poor silly woman! we all laughed at her; and notwithstanding her constant assertion that 'she could have married anybody,' she ended by marrying an aged knight of Hanover, which very much delighted her father, who said he was so glad that at last, after all her fishing, 'she was provided for.' She was a tall coarse-looking woman, with a complexion as yellow as Lady ——'s chariot, and hair as red as the edges of a High Church Prayer-book.

Double Zero House was not at all ex-

clusive ; almost any one that had any claim to social position, and who was rich or amusing, was easily admitted. Lady Trevennis, however, drew the line most rigidly with her own sex. No lady (unless one whose high birth made her 'carry off,' as it were, her peccadilloes) who had offended, (by offended I mean had been found out) not against the laws of God, but against those of 'society,' ever entered within her doors. Lady Trevennis knew too well the value of humouring English respectability to permit *that*.

As I turned down St. James's-street, I saw Mr. Faynix's heavy mail phaeton, with its tall powerful-looking iron-grays, standing at the door of Brooks's. The statesman was not in it ; but I soon recognised the gay old boy leaning over an open barouche, in conversation deep with Mrs. Delamere. Now Mrs. Delamere was one of

those ladies at whom Lady Trevennis drew the line. It was the constant ambition of this lady to have the *entrée* of Double Zero House; but it was an ambition never gratified. She was the wife of a distinguished Indian judge; but ill health, and the desire to see her children (so *she* said), made her quit Calcutta for London, leaving her husband to carry on his judicial duties alone. It was reported, however, that her name had given rise to certain scandals at Calcutta; and that it was not at her desire, but at the request of her husband, that she returned to England. I will not say she was really worse than other women; but she was not good style, and extremely, to put it as pleasantly as I can, indiscreet. She was in a kind of society in London; but the women fought shyer and shyer of her every day. Mr. Faynix had taken a great fancy to her; for, like many elderly men, he preferred *les*

femmes mûres; and if he could have persuaded Lady Trevennis to invite her to Double Zero House, he would have done so; but his daughter was mistress of her own home, and would not for a moment think of it. Perhaps it was that she disapproved the more of Mrs. Delamere on account of her being admired by her father.

Just as I was on the point of going up to speak to her, Mr. Faynix shook hands with her and took his leave, and then, not seeing me, went towards his club. I was about to follow him, and to content myself with merely bowing to Mrs. Delamere, when that lady's taper fingers beckoned me to her side. After the usual salutation she said,

'O, Mr. Disney, I want so much a card for Lady Trevennis's Tournament next month; everybody is talking about it. Pray do what you can to get me one, will you? O, if you do, I will do *anything* for you!'

And the enamelled face looked boldly into mine, with its vermillion lips, bella-donna'd eyes, Indian-inked eyebrows and lashes, and golden-dyed scented hair. Indeed, she looked as if she would do anything. I nicknamed her 'England of the Future.'

'I will ask Lady Trevennis to send you one, Mrs. Delamere,' said I; 'but I cannot promise that the answer will be in the affirmative.'

'O, I know that Lady Trevennis dislikes me; but why she does so, is really beyond me,' said she simply.

'Perhaps she is jealous of your superior natural beauty,' I said impertinently. I was always impertinent to Mrs. Delamere—third-rate people like one the better for being so. 'Women are so jealous one of another.'

'You needn't laugh at my natural beauty, as you call it, Mr. Disney,' said she, some-

what irritated. 'If you don't appreciate it, others do.'

'Appreciate it! why, I think it is perfect. Am I not an artist?'

'I don't know what you mean. But pray get me this card, will you?' said she.

'I will do my best.'

'I don't see that Lady Trevennis need give herself such airs, and pretend to be so exclusive,' said she, rather haughtily. 'There are stories about her as well as other people;' and she looked steadily at me.

'There are stories about every one, even about the beautiful Mrs. Delamere,' I replied.

'And when are you going to bring out another picture?' asked she, turning the conversation.

'Perhaps never. I am intending to give up Art as a profession; at least for the present,' said I.

‘What! you, such a great artist, going to give up painting! Why?’

‘Because I intend to leave that to the ladies;’ and blowing a kiss, I departed to join Mr. Faynix. I am afraid I treated Mrs. Delamere rather cavalierly; but not perhaps more so than she deserved. As for her trying to get a card for the Trevennis’s Tournament, why—a solicitor might as well get into Boodle’s!



CHAPTER II.

AT HURLINGHAM.

Cardinal. 'O, cruel, cruel sport !

Archbishop. A barbarous pastime,
Disgraceful to the land that calls itself
Most Protestant and Christian.'

WE were not long rattling over the four miles between St. James's-street and Hurlingham ; for Mr. Faynix drove like Jehu the son of Nimshi, who made Israel to sin— which she has continued to do ever since.

Pleasant looked the garden, the fragrant hayfield, and the river glistening in the sun ; and pleasant, too, was the cold lunch we both had in the house, before Mr. Fay-

nix began the noble sport of shooting 'the gentle dove.'


As we threaded our way on to the shooting ground, through the barouches, victorias, broughams, T-carts, and cabs that crowded the drive, I heard the band beginning to strike up. The chairs within the roped enclosure were nearly all occupied, though it was as yet early for the arrival of fashionable visitors. I left Mr. Faynix shooting a few 'owls' at twenty-nine yards' rise, preparatory to the match, and amused myself by surveying critically the gay toilettes and their fair owners, who honoured with their patronage the hard Windsor chairs placed in lines within the enclosure. A dark blue bonnet, and dark blue silk petticoat beneath the yellowest of Tassauss, attracted my attention.

'My dear Mrs. M'Mushroom, how do you do? I thought I might meet you

here, and so delayed a message that Lady Trevennis desired me to deliver to you.' And then I spoke to her about the Tournament.

Mrs. M'Mushroom and I were great friends. She was a rather tall, rather stout, and had been a rather pretty woman, with dark liquid hazel eyes, healthy cheeks that no amount of violet powder could tone down to a fashionable pallor, and a large mouth full of the whitest and most perfect of teeth. She looked what she was, a kindly good-natured honest Scotchwoman; her only fault was, that she wanted to look more than this by affecting to be a fine lady—to which pretension she had not the slightest claim. She was the daughter of a large manufacturer at Galashiels, and had married an enormously wealthy iron-master at Aberdeen. Their married life kept the even tenor of its way for many years. Mr.

M'Mushroom, immersed in business, had very little time for anything else, and what leisure fell to him was spent in decorating and improving the magnificent estate he had lately purchased from a Scottish peer, whose descent was as rapid as Mr. M'Mushroom's ascent. As Mrs. M'Mushroom annually for some ten years presented her lord and (iron) master with pledges of her love with the most painful punctuality, her time was also considerably taken up. When she wanted change of air, she was delighted with a tour in the Highlands or their shooting-box on her husband's moors; and when she thought a little society would do her good, she and her husband took a house in Edinburgh for a couple of months. Neither their thoughts nor their ambition went beyond being happy and useful in the position that Providence had placed them. Fond of her husband and



of her children, Mrs. M'Mushroom's life was one most equal and contented.

But one fatal day a Mr. M'Truckle, a wealthy brewer and friend of her husband's, who lived also at Aberdeen, became M.P. for Musselburgh. Mrs. M'Truckle now lorded it over poor Mrs. M'Mushroom to an extent not to be borne by human endurance. She took the *pas* of her on every occasion. She laughed at the people in Aberdeen, and ridiculed the society of Edinburgh; she took her children from a Scottish boarding-school, and sent them to London; she left the Presbyterian Church, and became an Episcopalian; she affected to talk English; and in fact she pooh-poohed everything and everybody about her. 'There was only one place to live in, and that was London,' she said over and over again to Mrs. M'Mushroom. In fact, Mrs. M'Truckle brewed mischief, as her husband brewed beer.

The die was cast. Nothing would now satisfy Mrs. M'Mushroom but that her husband must enter Parliament; and when a lady takes anything very violently into her head, nothing on earth or in the water under the earth will prevent her from attaining her object. At least if there be anything, it is certainly not in the shape of that poor unprotected animal called a husband. Mr. M'Mushroom was accordingly returned M.P. for Porto Bello, and very shortly afterwards had the honour of sitting on a Committee with Mr. M'Truckle to investigate matters he didn't care about, and to listen to answers he didn't understand.

Thanks to ministerial receptions, Mrs. M'Mushroom was soon in society. She bought a splendid house at Queen's-gate, and furnished it regardless of all expense. Her hospitalities were worthy of an empress. Unkind people said they were too os-


tentatious, and very vulgar; and I must own, prejudiced as I am in her favour, that she was rather wanting in taste; but still everybody crowded to them. As season after season passed, Mrs. M'Mushroom became more and more considered as a somewhat notable personage in London. Her husband soon made a reputation in the House of Commons as a most reliable authority on all manufacturing subjects (nothing like having a special knowledge in the House), and had been put into one or two Royal Commissions. He was an out-and-out Progressist, and in his own heart of hearts hoped that England would soon become a republic.

A year before I met Lady Trevennis, she and Mrs. M'Mushroom had become acquainted; and Lady Trevennis, seeing that Mrs. M'Mushroom was looked upon as the social leader of the Progressist

manufacturing party, became very civil to her. The 'Man of Iron's' wife, as the wags called Mrs. M'Mushroom, was delighted with the beautiful and haughty Lady Trevennis, and did all in her power to cement the intimacy. She soon became a most trusty ally of Lady Trevennis, and brought over to her side much of the Progressist manufacturing element—no slight acquisition in those days.

Lady Trevennis in her turn was also useful to Mrs. M'Mushroom in many ways: she gave her hints about her furniture, her dinners, her dresses, her carriages, and checked in numerous instances that lady's decided taste for dazzling effect. The consequence was, that Mrs. Mac was very much afraid of Lady Trevennis, and seldom felt entirely at ease in her presence. She was always fearful that she might commit some solecism or other; and the consequence was,

the poor little woman, instead of being genial and almost motherly, as was her wont, with those of her own sex who were younger than herself, was stiff, formal, and restrained, whenever she entered Double Zero House. As for Mr. M'Mushroom, when he was asked to dinner, he was utterly indifferent to all the lessons of good behaviour which his wife endeavoured to teach him, and picked his teeth with his silver toothpick, ate peas with his knife, made about the same noise over his soup as a cow or a German baron when drinking, and altogether was as easy and at home as if he had been in his ancestral mansion at Glenaloch, near Aberdeen. Often at dinner I intercepted the frown or angry shake of the head which Mrs. M'Mushroom intended only her husband to see, in the vain hope that it might make him eat more carefully or laugh less loudly, &c. But Mr. M'Mush-



room heeded her not; and on the whole, I think he was far less of the—forgive me, dear Mrs. Mac—snob than his wife with her would-be society ways.

When I saw them out, I often thought how they must look back with envy upon their early days, when they were content with their own position in life, and were free from all that ‘dam nonsense,’ as Mr. M‘Mushroom called the requirements of modern society. To me Mrs. Mac was very frank, and related most candidly all her fears, disappointments, and mortifications; and I did all in my power to cheer the kind little woman. It was not till I was admitted into ‘good society’ that I became aware of the malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness which women evince towards each other under the slightest provocation; and I was therefore sure, that when Mrs. Mac committed some little

solecism or other, the women, jealous of her wealth or her intrusion amongst them, let her off far from easily, and subjected her to no small amount of spite and mortification. With all her faults—and they were only those engendered by contact with the world — Mrs. M'Mushroom was a most kindly woman, and I shall ever retain a grateful recollection of her memory.

At the time of which I am writing, there was no doubt that Lady Trevennis was now the popular Progressist leader, and was easily distancing Lady St. James; but much of her good fortune in obtaining the advantage over her rival was due to the efforts of the lady with whom I was now chatting at Hurlingham.

Mrs. Mac was very great about the Tournament. Everything ought to be, she said, *first-class* (as odious a word as 'genteel,' or 'riding in a carriage,' in my opinion),

and no expense spared. And then she proceeded to give her opinion as to how the entertainment should be conducted. There should be, of course, lots of eating and drinking, and flirting and dancing; and in addition to the revival of the sports that pleased our ancestors (Mrs. M'Mushroom's ancestors!—but you should have seen her ancestral portrait-gallery at Glenaloch—Woburn Abbey was nothing to it), croquet, lawn-billiards, skittles, Aunt Sally, and in fact everything. Everybody should be in fancy dress; the Tournament should last a week; and the guests should arrive at Eaton Lodge in gilded barges from Whitehall-stairs. Her views on the matter were interrupted for a moment by Kit Lorimer passing our chairs.

‘Hallo, Disney!’ said he. ‘O, how do you do, Mrs. M'Mushroom? I am sorry to have to trouble you, but pray let me

pass. How do, Miss Chatteris?" and he bowed to a very pretty girl who sat behind me. A vacant chair was by her side, and it was to secure it that he had to disturb us. I rose up to let him pass. He was a good-looking fellow—a clerk in the Office for Creating Colonial Differences—who spent his leisure in killing pigeons, and his office-hours in writing novels, which only wanted a little immorality in them to make them appear written by a lady.

‘How have you been shooting?’ asked I.

‘O, awfully bad—missed every bird! Clinking good birds to-day, though; rise like a shot—or my spirits when I see you, Miss Chatteris!’ replied he, sitting down beside that young lady, who looked delighted at his arrival.

‘Faynix is shooting in splendid form,’ continued he; ‘killed all his birds as yet. Will you back him—100 to 7?’

‘No, thanks; I never believe in your second-barrel men,’ answered I, turning towards Mrs. Mac, and resuming our conversation, which had been interrupted. But that lady’s talk fell idly on my ear, for I was listening to Lorimer telling Miss Chatteris that Lord Edgeware would be in town in a few days. ‘I suppose,’ said he, ‘he has come up especially for the Trevennis Tournament, for I know he hates England. What a pity a man with his property and splendid estates cares only for Paris! He ought to get married!’

‘Yes, indeed,’ replied Miss Chatteris, with a sigh; ‘but it is only the *very* young men who marry nowadays, you know.’

‘Well, I suppose matrimony is like the chaff that flieth before the wind—it’s only the very young birds that mistake it for wheat. And Edgeware is hardly very young now, either in years or in innocence.’

‘O, I hear he is very wicked; indeed, mamma says—’ And then she stopped; seeing a wounded blue-rock trying to scale the palings,—‘O, that poor pigeon! What cruel sport! Do you think it will get over, Mr. Lorimer?’

‘O yes, easily,’ said he carelessly; and then in a low voice: ‘I wish I were as sure of getting over my attachment for you as that pigeon is of getting over yon paling! Ah! you women cry out against us men about the cruelty of pigeon-shooting; but what’s the difference between it and flirtation? You catch your man, make him a target, and shoot at him with eyes and tongue and all your charms—weapons that carry much farther than a breech-loader!—and when you have hit him and wounded him, simply to satisfy your own vanity, you care about as much for him as I do for the bird I’ve shot.’

‘O, how pretty!’ said Miss Chatteris, laughing; ‘do put that in your next book!’ And then a conversation ensued between them, in that low voice which means so much, but which is never intended for other ears than those to which it is addressed.

‘Kit,’ thought I, ‘is evidently hard hit; but though a good shot, he is aiming at rather too high game, I fear; for Miss Chatteris must have at least 100,000*l.*, and poor Kit has about 100*l.* a year, with an annual increase of ten; and if he’s lucky, he’ll get his promotion in another eighty years.’

As I rose up from my seat, after a long conversation with Mrs. Mac, to look after Mr. Faynix, I overheard Lorimer say in a very low voice: ‘Well, give Edgeware the cold shoulder as much as you can. I can’t tell you any more; but all I can tell you is, that it always riles me to see him

paying attention to you.' And then I heard Miss Chatteris say very tenderly, 'I will do what you wish; and if he asks me to dance, I will always say I am engaged;' and she laid emphasis upon the word *engaged*, which told me that Kit Lorimer had brought down his pigeon. But would the retriever—I mean the mother—make her fly away?

I wended my way back to where the men were shooting, laughing inwardly at Lorimer's idea that Lord Edgeware had quitted Paris on purpose to be present at the Tournament. 'I don't think his lordship will be asked *there*, at all events,' said I to myself. The enclosure was now full, and the dresses of the ladies reminded me of Ascot on Cup-day. No chairs were vacant—and but few of their occupiers; for chatting, gentle laughter, murmurs of surprise or dissent, scandal, lies, gossip, and all the other ingredients

and accompaniments of modern conversation were being freely indulged in by all.

The enclosure seemed a gay parterre of variegated bonnets and skirts all in full bloom, relieved by the conventional frock-coats and gray shooting-suits of the men. As I neared the sportsmen (?) there mingled with the swelling sounds of martial music cries of 'Five to two!' 'Yes!' 'No!' 'Three to one!' 'All right, once!' 'Ready?' 'Pull!' 'He is sure to kill!' 'He dies! he dies, for a pony!' 'I'll bet a pound he goes!' &c.

I joined the men, several of whom I knew, and made a few trifling bets. Mr. Faynix was in great spirits; for he, with three others, had killed all his birds, and was now with Lord Cartridge, Darrell Lock, and Sir Lucius O'Trigger, shooting off the 'ties' at thirty yards for the possession of a handsome gold cup. The rest were looking on, backing or fielding. At last, after an

exciting match between Mr. Faynix and Sir Lucius (for Lord Cartridge had missed his bird), the prize fell to my patron, who had shot magnificently throughout.

The match over (between ten M.P.s and ten members of the Club), Mr. Faynix did not stay for the handicap that followed, but drove back at once again to town. I, however, remained behind; and pulling out a cigar from my case, sat smoking among the men who were shooting, or about to shoot, and listened to their conversation—occasionally joining in it when I knew the speakers.

‘And so, Lynton my boy, you are going to stand for Bedford? Hope you’ll spell your election address better than your letters asking me to mess!’ said a young supercilious-looking legislator, who had nearly been unseated for bribery, and whose restive egotistical temperament made him speak in the House on every occasion, to display his

own ignorance and the temper of his audience. He was christened the 'Bribery Colt,' and from his very protuberant eyes and long nose a House-of-Commons wag had said that he always reminded him of a division of the House—he was all ayes and noes! The man he addressed as Lynton was the younger son of a peer, and was always in debt, in love, in drink, and in fact in everything he ought not to be. He was an immense man; and his neckless head and huge corporation made one shudder when one thought of apoplexy. Had you met him in the country, you would have taken him for a head keeper.

'Not I,' he replied; 'I am not so fond of thrusting myself forward—leave that to you.'

'Quite right—Nature has done it pretty well for you!' muttered the polite and unpersonal legislator *sotto voce*, whilst shoul-

dering his gun and walking away to his distance.

‘Is it true that Seton is going to be married?’ said one young man to another.

‘Yes; to a Miss Cowes, niece of Lord Alderney,’ replied the other.

‘Any coin?’

‘O yes, pots of money. I wish the deuce I had his luck!’

‘What’ll he do about Violette?’

‘O, I don’t know; the right-hand never knows what the left-hand does.’

‘Where’s Riddle?’ asked an elderly gentleman of a Captain Lowndes, one of the best shots of the day.

‘Don’t you know?—poor fellow! he died a week ago,’ replied the Captain.

‘Good heavens! you don’t say so! Why, I saw him only ten days ago here,’ said the elderly gentleman, looking pained and surprised.

‘Yes; he went down to his place at the beginning of last week—felt ill one day after dinner—all the household alarmed—sent up to town for Sir Dyer Bolus, who came down by the afternoon express; felt Riddle’s pulse, told him he was not well, ordered a blister, low diet, and feet to be put occasionally in hot water; received his fifty guineas, and went back to town in time for dinner. Poor Riddle got no better, and so sent for Sir Hetter O’Dox for a second opinion; who came up at once, confounded Sir Dyer’s treatment, told his patient to live well, take off the blister, and put his feet in *cold* water. At the end of a week, poor fellow, he was a dead man! His country apothecary says, that if he had only kept his bed, and taken a few compound rhubarb pills, he would have been perfectly well in a few days; but his people got nervous about him, and so sent up to London for advice.’

‘Confound these doctors!’ said the elderly gentleman angrily; ‘they are worse than the old highwaymen; they not only take your money, but your life. Plague on ’em!’

‘Hallo, Disney, how do?’ and a young dark-visaged gentleman, who looked as if he had drunk a great deal of coffee in his youth, came up and sat beside me.

‘Well, Chick, I hope you’ve won your money back; you lost a good deal last Saturday,’ said I.

‘Yes, I got it hot then, and no mistake. I don’t believe in making money at pigeon-shooting; especially at the fancy prices “fielders” are asking, don’t you know,’ replied he.

‘You’d better stick to the City,’ I said.

‘By Jove! I think I shall. Give up pigeon-shooting, and take to “kite-flying,” don’t you know,’ laughed he. ‘I say, Disney, I wish you would get me a card for

this Tournament they are all talking about, don't you know. You'll be an awful brick if you do.'

'I'll try,' replied I.

'Thanks. Hallo, it's my turn to shoot. I'll take your five to two on my shot—done?'

'No, most taking youth, decidedly not. I've lost ten pounds already at this festive amusement, and, unlike you, I don't know a bank where the wild tea grows.'

Dick Chicory was a type of man not uncommon in London. He was a junior partner in the firm of Chicory, Grounds, and Co., Mark-lane, tea and coffee merchants; a firm which had made a very large fortune in the East by swindling the Chinese in opium and the English in bohea. Dick's great ambition was to get into society; for though his father, in his large mansion at Clapham, 'kept a good deal of company,' as

Chicory *père* called it, young Dick, who had been educated at Eton and plucked at Oxford, looked down upon his father's friends, and rather snubbed them; in which respect he was not very different from other merchants' sons, I believe.

A good-natured University friend had got him into the 'New Mixture,' a second-rate club, and also into Hurlingham. The young man was delighted to shoot and lose his money in such good company, and swaggered so among the partners at Mark-lane and his young brothers at Clapham, that his father really thought that his son was a regular 'slap-up swell,' and knew no one 'under a lord.' But, alas, Chick, as he was called, never went out into the gay world, notwithstanding all his talk. In his handsome chambers in St. James's-street no invitations arrived—at least not of the kind he wanted. He lived a good deal at his

club, frequented theatres and the opera very freely, rode every afternoon in the Row (how he wished he could have done so in the morning!—but that cursed ‘business!’), had an *external* acquaintance with every one of note in town, knew their faces and carriages, and was a most valuable *cicerone* to country cousins.


He knew a good many men; and to hear him talk, you would have taken him for a prince of the blood at the very least. He read the *Court Journal* and *Morning Post*, and learnt by heart the engagements of the week; and then would gracefully lounge up to Brown, or Jones, or Snooks, at the ‘New Mixture,’ and say with charming nonchalance, ‘Going to Lady Knaresborough’s to-night?’ and when the man questioned would reply no, Chick would say, ‘You don’t care about s’ciety, I believe, and quite right too; but a f’la must do some-

thing.' This kind of thing went down at the 'New Mixture,' and Chicory had the reputation of being 'a man who goes out a good deal.'

I could not help moralising on man's discontent when I thought of Chick. Here was a young man of fair fortune, but who exceeded it, in a business that men of birth would be only too glad to get their sons into, in order that one day they might attain the position that Chicory now enjoyed; and yet he was unhappy, and ashamed of his profession. Hundreds of friends he had who would have been delighted to extend the right hand of welcome to the young man, and show him attention and hospitality; but he cut them all, in the hopes of getting into the society of those who would never care for him, except for what they got out of him, and with whom he would never be happy. *Vanitas vanitatum*, all

is vanity. When *will* people be content with what they have; and instead of *always* comparing themselves with those who have more, compare themselves with those who have less?

Chick's English was peculiar, and consisted of the latest Young-England slang. If a man failed, 'he went an awful mucker,' or a 'howler,' or a 'cropper;' when he was well, he was 'as fit as a fiddle;' when he was ill, he was 'infernally seedy;' when he was recovering, he was 'pounds better;' when he played a game of chance, he was 'going to have a flutter;' if a thing satisfied him, 'it suited him down to the ground;' a man he thought a cad was 'an outsider,' or 'dam bad form;' a ball or dinner that was shabby was 'a most one-horsed affair;' work was 'a grind;' a horse was a 'gee;' sentiment or show-off was 'gallery;' his parents were 'his people;'



a man who was an accomplice was 'in the same stable, don't you know;' racing not to win was 'milking;' a clergyman was 'a sky pilot;' and every one he did not like or who did not like him was 'an awful ass.' In addition to the frequent use of these and various other elegant epithets, he ended almost every sentence with 'don't you know, you know?'

I had made Mr. Chicory's acquaintance when I was a struggling artist in London, and could afford to get into no better club than the 'New Mixture;' but since my rise in the social scale, I seldom went to my old haunt. It used to amuse me in those days to hear Chicory talking to his friends in the bow-window of the club, and as every *well-appointed* carriage passed down St. James's-street, say, 'How well the Duchess of Lynforde is looking!' or 'What magnificent horses Lady Skeneflynt always

gets, to be sure !' when perhaps it was only the bran-new equipage of Mrs. Roturier, the wife of the well-known sugar-baker in St. Mary Axe, or Mrs. Dawson the gunmaker's wife. Sometimes he would be found out—but not often ; for the 'New Mixture' is chiefly full of Irish barristers of the Middle Temple, Somerset-House gentlemen, third-rate journalists, and men who have to live on some two hundred a year, as I had to do, and who do not, or cannot, go into society—but when found out (as he was when he said that Lady Medoc was that old harridan the Marchioness of Rougemont), he replied quite simply, 'Dear me, I must have made a mistake ; my eyesight is so bad.' But it was through these mistakes that he acquired his knowledge of external London society.

As simply 'a painter fl'a,' Mr. Chicory did not take the slightest notice of me ;

but when he saw my name in the paper at the fag end of the lists of guests at fashionable receptions, and heard that I was private secretary to a cabinet minister, and a cousin of Lady Trevennis, he changed his demeanour, and became anxious to cultivate my acquaintance.

My moralising about Chicory was cut short by Joe Roundell-Roundell coming up to me. He was very cordial and agreeable—immensely so; hence I, not unnaturally, concluded he was going to ask a favour. He did. It was the request that man after man had made to me—to get a card for the Trevennis Tournament. I returned the usual answer, that I would ‘ask Lady Trevennis.’ Joe was a young clergyman, who had gone into the Church to occupy a family living of some 800*l.* a year—for which a wild course at Oxford had, of course, unusually fitted him. He was a man of a very old York-

shire family, good-looking, and a keen sportsman ; fond of hunting, shooting, fishing, and of everything but his clerical duties, which were performed by two elderly curates on 100*l.* a year, who had been in the Church about thirty-five years without receiving farther preferment.

The Rev. Joe Roundell-Roundell's bishop, who was very great at Exeter Hall, and very little everywhere else, by no means approved of the sporting tastes of the young rector ; and one day seeing Roundell walking through the cathedral town dressed *de rigueur* as a fisherman, went up to him, and said :

‘ I really do not approve of this kind of thing—you never see *me* in such a costume.’

To which Roundell replied easily—for his lordship, though a bishop, had seen his first days at a stationer's shop in the Strand (now kept by his lordship's brother), and

Roundell thought a good deal about that ambiguous and expansive title, 'a gentleman'—

'Your lordship's dress is suited for the *see*—mine for the *rivar*!' And, bowing, coolly walked away.

'Can you give me a lift back to town?' said I to Roundell, for the ladies were making a move to go.

'Awfully sorry, my dear fellow, but I have a man with me, and my trap doesn't hold more than two; but if—'

'O, thanks, never mind; I see a lad over there; I'll go and ask her.'

And leaving Roundell, I went towards the tent, near which an elderly lady was seated. She was very wrinkled, slightly rouged, extremely powdered, and her face looked like the scaffolding of a handsome face fallen in. I made my best bow.

'Will your Grace grant me a favour?'

‘What is it, you naughty man—what do you want? I saw you talking to that Mr. Roundell, and I am sure you were talking scandal about some one; tell me what it was.’

‘I think I need hardly tell your Grace that when two men talk together, they are so occupied in talking about themselves that they think of no one else; it is only your Grace’s charming sex that always requires a third person to talk about; we men, if not egotistical, are nothing.’

‘Sit down beside me. You talk; I like young men who talk; the young men of the present day never open their mouths except to put something into them. Get up, Mr. Grabasonne, and give your chair to Mr. Disney. Good-bye, and tell Lady Selina I’ll ask the Duke for what she wants; but, as his Grace promises everything and never does anything, I wouldn’t rely on him.’

And the next minute I was seated in the chair vacated by a younger son of the descendant of a hundred earls.

‘And so you want me to drive you back? Very well. Lady Sophia is with me, and so we can talk about the Tournament. It is a very good idea, that of hers. It reminds one of the past; I like to be reminded of the past. I hate the present; it is odious—as odious as that nasty Lady Selina, who is always asking me to do some favour or other for her uninteresting daughters or ugly sons. You never bore me to grant you favours. You are a nice young man, and I like nice young men; not the young men of the present day, with their odious talk about horses and city shares—you are not like them: you remind me of Captain Lytligh, who was poor dear George the Fourth’s aide-de-camp, and a very handsome young man. Yes, you are very handsome, and of course poor—all

handsome young men are poor; it's only those vulgar Manchester people that are rich nowadays — like Mrs. Woofe, with whom I have to dine to-night. Horrid woman! I quite hate her.—Yes, dear,' said her Grace, breaking off and talking to pretty Mrs. Allen, who had just come up,—‘yes, dear, I went to hear your Canon Madden last Wednesday, and he is delightful, quite charming; he gave us an excellent sermon—you should have heard it—on Christian charity.—Well, and what was I saying, Mr. Disney? O, that you are poor. Yes, but you must marry a rich wife. Let me see, there is Miss Andrews the brewer's daughter—she will have at least 100,000*l.*, only I hear that it is chiefly in beer. It's a pity that Mr. M'Mushroom's eldest daughter is not old enough for you, for she will have at least as much as Ethel Andrews, and perhaps more, and I think iron sounds better than beer;

but it's no use thinking about her. You must not be proud, and give yourself airs, and say you are not going to marry into trade; if you want a rich wife, you *must* marry into trade. Look at Lord Axlelathe. Well, his wife's father originally kept a little huckster's shop, and by industry and ability—which means dishonesty, you know—he has made an immense fortune, so that the money of Lady Axlelathe goes to build and re-furnish Engine Castle, which is a very good thing for Axlelathe. But I am glad you have given up being an artist, for you are a gentleman; and when I was told that you were an artist, it always reminded me of the man who tunes my pianos, and such people.'

How long the garrulous old lady would have gone on, I know not, for when she took the bit of conversation between her false teeth, there was no stopping her; at least I was much too well-bred a man to think of

interrupting a Duchess. On the contrary, I felt flattered that her Grace—who was neither witty nor amusing, but simply her Grace—paid so much attention to me before the gay crowd that surrounded her.

It is astonishing how soon an ordinary commoner becomes a toady and a snob in good society; the only difference being, that the men who declaim most against toadyism and snobbism are of course rather more so than other people. At this period of my life I frankly own that I *was* a snob; that is to say, if the word means to imply that I preferred to be seen talking to the Duchess of Whistine than to Mrs. M'Mushroom, and that I would sooner dine with a Marquis than with a Cotton-spinner. There, I confess it; and let my worst enemy make what use he pleases of the confession. And the only difference between me and other men in this respect,

my social satirist, is, that I confess it, whilst others pretend to hide it. The social influence of our peerage is far too strong a current for a man *in* society to attempt to swim against it. Outsiders seated on the banks say, of course, that the current is not strong, and that it is becoming weaker and weaker every day. Perhaps it is; but once let their ambition be satisfied (for their depreciation is only jealousy) by their being permitted to jump in, and they will soon find that England still dearly loves a lord and Mrs. Bull a duchess.

Her Grace of Whistine's kind advice about matrimony (matter o' money?) was cut short by Lady Sophia Kingairloch coming up to propose our driving back to town.

'Give me your arm, Mr. Disney,' said the Duchess imperiously; and as her skinny gloved hand rested on my arm, she said

sadly, 'There was a time, my young friend, when the gayest and handsomest of the men were only too happy to be my attentive knights; but now—' The old lady did not complete her sentence. No doubt she thought of the past, when she was the beautiful Sarah Paddington, a reigning toast at Carlton House and the belle of Almack's.

As I passed through the motley crowd, many a fair dame bowed and made way for her Grace, or else came up to her and exchanged some conversational small coin; and all the men bowed deeply as she passed them. And constantly behind me I heard soft whispers of 'Who is he?' and then something about 'Lady Trevennis,' and 'Really! you don't say so!' and then a fashionable titter always followed such remarks.

As I neared the exit with my aged burden, I saw Harold Hendon (or Arold

Endon as he called himself: by what peculiar parental dispensation is it that men who never pronounce their *h*'s invariably have that consonant as a prefix to either their christian names or their surnames, or sometimes to both?), who satirised the aristocracy in a penny paper, glaring at me with fiendish envy. He had written a very nasty review on my picture in his paper; and so I passed him without the slightest token of recognition, though I knew he was dying to nod to a man on whose arm leant a Duchess. But I was becoming daily more amiable to my own sex. I was beginning to see, if you have the women with you, what is man against you? And the women were with me.



CHAPTER III.

FRIENDSHIP RENEWED.

'You may train the eagle
To stoop to your fist ;
Or you may inveigle
The phoenix of the East ;
The lioness, ye may move her
To give o'er her prey :
But you'll ne'er stop a lover—
He will find out his way.'

AT the commencement of the season, the rivalry between Lady Trevennis and Lady St. James was, as I have said, very close ; but at the end of the first five weeks, it was plainly seen that Lady Trevennis was winning easily. The followers of Lady St. James were rapidly leaving her, and indeed that

distinguished lady seemed to be aware of the fact that her chance of leadership was gone ; for instead of making a race of it, she soon gave in, and allied herself more and more closely with the Fossil party. She considered that the Progressists were going too much ahead, and that a reaction would soon take place in the country against the extravagance, frivolity, and dissipation that were now the fashion.

The truth was, I regret to state, that Lady Trevennis at this time was aiming at popularity by pandering to the vices of the day by her splendid extravagance. This pleased greatly the wealthy trading classes (who chiefly constituted the ranks of the Progressists), who only wanted some one to set the fashion of unbridled expenditure in everything, to rush madly in and outrival each other. In short, Lady Trevennis preserved her social throne by very

much the same means as the Imperial mistress of a neighbouring country supported her dynasty—by frequent new fashions, by princely hospitalities, by a not very severe order of morality, and by a *luxe effréné* respecting all matters of art, dress, taste, and appointments.

The result was, that the poorer classes in London society, finding themselves utterly unable to compete with the Progressist leaders of *ton*, went over politically and socially to Lady St. James, and hoped that the true blue aristocratic Fossil party would soon come in, and severe respectability and a proper expenditure be once more the order of the day. The Marquis of St. James, at his wife's request, retired from office, where he had confused our relations with foreign countries as ably as his predecessors, and broke off entirely from his party. He hoped that the extreme Progressists would have to

go out, and that a coalition might take place between the Fossils and the mild Progressists.

Lady Trevennis took no notice of the desertion of her poorer friends. She knew that nowadays the governing classes do not mean the aristocracy, as they did from 1688 to 1832, but the wealthy. And the Plutocrats—the great bankers, cotton-spinners, and City princes—were with her heart and soul. Their wives imitated, and out-rivalled in many instances, the expenditure of Lady Trevennis. Never had London seen in the Park such splendid equipages; never were such fabulous prices offered for horses; never were women's dresses so magnificent; never were dinners conducted with such consummate art and princely taste; never had the world such a constant succession of splendid banquets, balls, breakfasts, fêtes champêtres, and entertainments of every description, as at the time I am writing of.

And it was all due to Lady Trevennis and her friends. In addition to social extravagance of all kinds, and a license in dress that was positively indecent, Lady Trevennis had created a few reforms, merely to show her power as the now recognised leader of fashion. It was she who exchanged one day the thronged drive of the Ladies' Mile for the quiet promenade from Apsley-gate to Albert-gate. She repeated the exchange the next day; and no sooner was the sober green barouche of Lady Trevennis seen in the then deserted Drive than carriage after carriage followed her example. At the end of a week, with the exception of Lady St. James and Lady Blancbecque (the leader of the Fossils), and their friends, the Ladies' Mile was almost deserted, and the fashionable promenade in the afternoon became from Apsley-gate to Knightsbridge.

It was Lady Trevennis who one night

told Lord Carnation (the Count D'Orsay of my time), when sitting next her at Double Zero House in the drawing-room after dinner, both drinking their tea, that she thought it would be far better taste if the young men about town would not wear jewelry in the evening (his lordship having a great weakness for fancy studs—domino masks with diamond eyes, gold heads with ruby eyes, and the like). Accordingly the next night at the Duchess of Charing's, Lord Carnation, Wyndsor Pinke, and Dawson Halsythe, the three greatest bucks or swells of the day, appeared sans studs, sans watch-chain, sans jewelry of every sort, but simply having pearl buttons in their shirts, and no other ornaments whatever. This became afterwards, as you know, the fashion, much to the jewellers' discontent.

It was Lady Trevennis, aided by Mr. Faynix, who brought in blue coats with gilt

buttons (Lady St. James attempted to introduce black velvet tunics and knickerbockers; but as Lord Blancbecque's legs were bad, Lady Blancbecque did not support it, and so the scheme fell to the ground), which for a short time so occupied the instincts—I beg pardon, I mean the minds—of our *petits crevés*. Mr. Faynix had a great fancy for the dress in vogue in the days of the Regency—light-fitting pantaloons made of silk web, silk stockings, frilled shirt, white choker, white waistcoat, blue evening coat with brass buttons, and a cocked-hat; but the dandies of the present day laughed at the cocked-hat and the tight-fitting pantaloons, and told Lady Trevennis that they had no objection to try the blue coat, but could not 'go in' for anything else. A few, to please Faynix, wore frill shirts; but the City clerks and the young shop-boys were so delighted with the intro-

duction, and made them so common, that the dandies were compelled to abandon them.

‘Horrid common people,’ said Mr. Faynix, ‘they spoil everything!’

It was Lady Trevennis who made a revolution in the arrangements of that most appealing institution, the dinner table, by introducing stars and crescents and crosses, and all kinds of variegated troughs full of the choicest flowers arranged in the most artistic manner, as an agreeable addition to the ordinary appointments for dinners *à la Russe*. It was Lady Trevennis also who brought the custom into fashion of the host and hostess during dinner sitting *vis-à-vis* at the centre of the table, instead of the old Darby and Joan sort of fashion of top and bottom.

But perhaps the two happiest novelties that Lady Trevennis made fashionable at this time, and which tended greatly to in-

crease her popularity and to propitiate the clergy, were two hitherto unknown articles of consumption, for the discovery of which she was indebted to me. When I was in Rome, I had come across some antelope steaks at the table of a Roman sculptor with whom I occasionally dined. The dish was so excellent, so exquisitely toothsome, that I felt sure that it had only to be known to be the rage. I told Lady Trevennis about it; and accordingly at her next dinner-party a *salmi* of antelope was served with truffles and macaroni. As I expected, it took the guests by storm, and the name and the dish were in everybody's mouth. The Bishop of St. Ventre, who combined the most rigid Protestantism with the epicurean tastes of a *gourmet*, and who was a great man in the Evangelical world, was so delighted with it, that I remember with something like pride how his face

glowed with delight as he bent over Lady Trevennis, and said, 'Pray what dish is this?' and then beckoned with his episcopal finger Handcock, her ladyship's butler, to his side, and with great solemnity said, 'Some more of this, please; some more of this!' From that day the Bishop spoke always in the highest terms of Lady Trevennis.

The *salmi d'antilope* was the grand dish of the season, and brought back to Lady Trevennis's ranks many a wavering Evangelical canon and prebendary, whose stomachs were the chief seat of their religion.

The other novelty was also introduced at the same time. A Turkish artist, whom I knew in my struggling days in London, always used to take with his coffee a strong liqueur extracted from a peculiar mushroom called the *Agaricus muscarius*, or intoxicating mushroom. It was infinitely preferable to curaoa, maraschino, noyau, or

any other kind of liqueur, being very dry with a most delicious bouquet; and when taken moderately, produced a delightfully cheering and exhilarating effect. Lady Trevennis had some of this distilled, and handed round with the ices. *L'eau de champignon* became as popular as the *salmi*; and was so appreciated in High-church circles (whose members, as a rule, cannot have their drink or their theology too dry), that I had the happiness of seeing many of their leaders pay their *devoirs* to Lady Trevennis along with their Low-church brethren, as a mark of respect to one who knew so well how to supply the 'fruits of good living.'

Though Lady Trevennis was now rapidly reaching the summit of her ambition (its climax was to see her father Premier), she was quite aware of how much she was indebted to her friends.

She knew—no one better—that though politically wealth nowadays is everything, yet socially, as long as birth and land go together, the aristocracy and landed gentry reign almost paramount in the drawing-room. Accordingly she cemented an intimacy with a lady who was as much a representative woman of her own order as was Mrs. M'Mushroom. The Duchess of Whistine was the social leader of the Exclusivists, whose reign was now over since oligarchy had been knocked on the head in 1832. Lady Trevennis knew that if she could effect an alliance with the Exclusivists she would be all-potent, and that the union would be far more powerful than the one attempted by Lady St. James with the Fossils. Thanks to the Duchess of Whistine she succeeded in her object.

The Exclusivists were tired of being always in the cold shade of Opposition, and

thought if Lady Trevennis played her cards well, her father might become Prime Minister, and they, in return for their services, would receive the sweets of office. The Countess of Nichelyne wanted her youngest daughter to be a 'wait;' the Duchess of Silverchester wanted to be again Keeper of the National Perquisites; Lady Mary Gore-Pannier wanted to be First Woman of the Dressing-gown; old Lady Whalebone was mad about becoming Mistress of the Crinolines; and as for the Duchess of Selkirk, she would have given anything but the recipe for her complexion to be once more First Keeper of the Powder-Puff.

And then their husbands and sons wanted something or other,—the Mastership of the Kennel, or Warming-pan in Waiting, or the Captaincy of the Men in Armour, or the Clo'men of the Yard, or the Controllershship of the Minute Expenditure, or Toothpick

in Ordinary, and the like, which they felt they had no chance of obtaining under the present Carney Ministry.

And therefore these high ladies and gentlemen, seeing that Lady Trevennis was an ambitious and popular woman, and one likely to further their interests, were delighted to obey the bidding of the Duchess of Whistine, and ally themselves with the Baronet's wife.

Mr. Faynix was looked on in the House as the Coming Man, and the people spoke of him as the probable future Premier when there should be a coalition between the extreme Progressists, of which he was the leader in the House of Commons, and the Exclusivists; for the Exclusivists had been so useful to Faynix in the Upper House, that he felt he could not overlook their claims. The position his daughter now occupied was certainly one of great service to him.

The Duchess of Whistine had been in her time a great beauty, and one much admired by the First Gentleman in Europe: a fact which had given rise to various stories; for the world has always been apt to jump at conclusions, and to put the kindest interpretation on things in general, and man's homage to the fair sex in particular. Certainly she was the belle of her day, and the only lady to whom Beau Brummel, when he had his lovely locks curled and his hat put on, condescended to uncover whenever he met her out driving. She married early the Marquess of Tyburne, who was very shy, and a great bookworm.

When the most noble the Marquess became his Grace of Whistine, he occupied his time in the society of *savans* and men of letters, and in reading papers at Social Science Congresses and at the Royal Society. And as his Duchess's thoughts never soared

higher than her looking-glass—for her chief reflections were before her mirror—and as she was extremely fond of society and gaiety of all sorts (being, of course, one of the lady patronesses of Almack's), they were a very well-assorted couple. It may be remembered that there was a duel about her between Lords Flybinight and Beaurington, and that she was the cause of poor Captain Lovelace's suicide.

As her Grace got older, and her mirror told her that rouge only the more set off her wrinkles, she ceased, to a certain extent, her attempts at 'repairing the ravages of Time by the appliances of Art,' and took to whist, reading French novels, and purchasing china and the most expensive of pugs. Unlike most old people, she did not age mentally as well as physically; she was as young in her own mind as the day when she danced at Almack's or

dined at Carlton House; it was only when she looked in the glass and found out that beauty is evanescent, and man's homage as fleeting, that she cursed Time and hated to be reminded of the present. She, however, could not live without gaiety; and as her birth, position, and fortune commanded the respect of all, her house was perhaps the most crowded and sought after in London. Like many old mundane women, she hated women of her own age: their painted cheeks, their false teeth and chignons, and the indelible marks of Time upon them, reminded her Grace of herself; and as it is never very agreeable to be reminded of what one wishes to forget, the Duchess looked upon old age in her own sex as an insurmountable disqualification for her dinners, balls, and receptions at Praed House.

Regarding old age as anything but a crown of glory, the ancient dame loved to

have her room full of youth, beauty, and freshness. Though the mothers were tabooed, their daughters were freely invited; and as it is a social axiom, that where the young women be, there will be the young men also, Praed House was one of the liveliest and most bewitching in town. Lady Trevennis was the Duchess's especial favourite. Her splendid beauty, her grace, her fascinating manner, struck the old woman with admiration.

‘Yes, dear, you are ambitious, I know; and I like you better than that pert stuck-up little Lady St. James, and I will further your wishes; yes, dear; and so you may command me in anything you wish,’ said the old lady to her.

And whenever I saw Lady Trevennis bend her graceful head, and press her beautiful lips on the wrinkled painted cheek of the old Duchess, it reminded me of a sun-

beam kissing a mummy. Her Grace took a great fancy to me; but as she did the same to all young men who were good-looking or agreeable, I cannot regard such predilection as a compliment. She was always wanting to do something or other for me whenever she saw me. One day it was, that she would get me an appointment; or another day it was, that she would get me a wife: it was useless my saying that I wanted nothing. However, I soon found out that she said the same to every young man, and immediately afterwards forgot all about what she had promised. She liked to affect that she had a great deal of power; and indeed she had, for the Duke 'was very highly thought of'—which was more than the Duchess was, who was considered a wicked scandalous old woman (scandal she had at her fingers' ends, like her nails), 'who at her time of life ought to have known better.'

However, as a social ally of Lady Trevennis, she was most serviceable; and to me, with tears in her eyes, she had sworn the most unutterable affection, because I cured her most valuable pug, that had taken the prize at Birmingham, of the mange. Ah me! many a ball and dinner had I at Praed House in the old, old days, when life was vanity, and hope eternal! What a contrast between *then* and *now*! *Quousque tandem abutere patientiâ meâ? O Mors!*

A few evenings after the match at Hurlingham, I returned with Mr. Faynix from Lord Cachet's, the Lord Premier Seal, where my patron had been dining, and where I had the honour of assisting at her ladyship's reception in the evening.

We stopped at the — Embassy to take up Lady Trevennis, and Mr. Faynix desired me to enter and escort her down to the carriage. The — Ambassador was

about to be transferred to another Court, and the ball at which Lady Trevennis was then present was the last of a series of farewell hospitalities that the Countess —— had given as a mark of her appreciation of the English character.

I had received a card, and had fully made up my mind to pass a very pleasant evening at ——, when Mr. Faynix asked me to return with Lady Trevennis as soon as possible, as he wanted me to make a true copy of a delightful speech he had delivered in the House a few nights ago on the sewage question. It was a disappointment; but I 'knew my position' too well to grumble; so I descended from the landau, passed through the crowd of powdered servants, who were as fat as aldermen and as pompous as half a dozen ambassadors, and attempted to ascend the crowded staircase.

But ascent was a matter of some diffi-

culty; and though I tried to make my way through the well-dressed throng with that utter indifference for the feelings of other people, and that total disregard for the corns of the men and the trains of the women, which is nowadays so characteristic of the true man of fashion, I was unable to succeed. Finding, therefore, that all my attempts to get before other people were vain, I was compelled to go with the tide, and to make progress at the rate of a foot a minute. I amused myself by regarding the people and listening to the conversation of those about me, whilst making my tortoise-like ascent.

‘And are you sure, Ethel, that it was last Tuesday week you saw him?’ said one fair girl to another.

‘O yes, I am certain; for I remember I had on my pink silk.’

‘What a wonderful position dress occu-

pies in woman's mind!' thought I; 'it is not only an ornament, but an Almanac. If a woman wants to know when an event occurred, she does not remember the event by its details, but by what dress she had on!'

'I suppose Edgeware will be here to-night?' said a young dandy in the Grenadiers (amid a group of men, who were standing together at the bottom of the staircase), stroking a very slight moustache, which was all the more slight from its being exceedingly cosmetiqued, so that its ends might have a little curl. He was Reggie Everton, who three months ago had been learning his lessons at Eton, but who was now learning his lessons in London, and with far greater facility than he had done at school. We nodded to each other; and I listened with curiosity to the answer to his question.

'Yaas, he told me so at the Coterie.

By the way, you'd better join the club he's going to get up; it'll be capital fun. We are going to have bowls, skittles, a fencing-room, and the whole bag of tricks. We've got a rattling good house and premises in King-street. Better join, eh?" said Guy Lancey, who was Lord Edgeware's 'gentleman jock' and right-hand man. He was a short thick-set man, with legs bowed like a parenthesis, and walked with that swagger peculiar to men who have lived much in the saddle. No one knew anything about him beyond that 'Edgeware had picked him up.' He was one of those men who appear like a meteor in society—live well, and very much among men, dress well, always have good dinners and good horses, play cards and billiards, and bet a great deal—and then all of a sudden you hear that they are 'broken,' and see them no more, except at Ostend, Dieppe, and Boulogne, where they look very

shabby, and play in the *établissement* for five-franc pieces.

‘Ah, don’t care for any more clubs at present,’ yawned Everton. ‘Take your thousand to seventy about ‘Blue Blazes’ for the Cup?’

‘I never bet with gentlemen—can’t afford it,’ said Guy Lancey, laughing.

There was a slight breach in the serried ranks of the guests, and I cleverly availed myself of it and arrived at the first landing.

‘Have you been to South Kensington to hear Professor Simianrace lecture, Maria?’ said a middle-aged lady in spectacles to a ‘blue’-looking girl with a very prominent nose.

‘O, no. I heard him once, and I don’t care to hear him again; besides, I don’t believe in the monkey theory—it’s not nice, and I don’t want to look upon the monkey-house in the Zoological as my ancestral

portrait-gallery. Jane told me that she could not attend to him at all last Wednesday, he was not a bit entertaining, and that what he said came in at one ear and went out at the other.'

'That would not be very difficult with Jane, seeing that she has nothing inside to stop it,' replied the spectacled dame, laughing.

'O, Mr. Chiltern,' said a gushing young lady, 'will you take me to the British Museum? I want so much to see the medals. I am so fond of looking at curiosities!'

'Are you? Well, I'll show you my aunts when they come up from Leamington,' replied Mr. Chiltern irreverently.

'I hear that Mr. Elephant speaks very often in the House,' said an elderly gentleman inquiringly to the Bribery Colt, 'and is listened to very attentively.'

'Very attentively—on Wednesdays,' replied the legislator dryly.

‘And are you going to the Tournament, Miss Lindsay?’ asked a young man.

‘Of course; everybody is going. You will go, surely?’ replied she.

‘Yes. Let me be your gallant knight, and break a lance in your favour,’ murmured the young man in a very low voice.

‘Break anything—but our engagement,’ replied the pretty girl very softly, and looking at her lover archly.

At last I had succeeded in making my entrance, and looked round the rooms as far as my eye could reach for Lady Trevennis; but I saw her not. A waltz was just ending, and so I waited, leaning against the doorway till it was over, before I threaded my way through the crowd. A very handsome man bowed to a very pretty blushing girl whom he had just escorted to her mother, and took his departure.

‘I feel *so* giddy, mamma. What a very

handsome man Captain Chichester is !' whispered the young lady.

'Yes, my dear,' replied the mother dryly; 'but after your first season, and when you know a little more of the world, it will not be merely a waltz or a handsome man that will turn your head. Let me look at your card.'

The music had ceased, and I put up my eye-glass to see if amid the moving throng I could distinguish the haughty carriage and royal beauty of Lady Trevennis. A fan touched my arm, and a gushing damsel of about two-and-thirty looked coquettishly into my face and said,

'O, Mr. Disney, will you kindly take me to mamma in the inner room yonder? My cousin is so ungallant as to prefer talking to my brother about Free-trade, or Reciprocity, or some other horrid political nonsense; and if I wait till they have done talking, I may wait here for ever.'

‘Then wait here with me for ever, and make my eternity blessed. But perhaps Mrs. Gordon might object,’ said I, offering my arm.

‘O you quiz!’ said she; and we walked across the room into the inner drawing-room.

Miss Gordon had been a pretty woman some six years ago; but a disappointment, and a series of flirtations that never came to more than flirtations, had soured her, and there was a sad weary look on her face which seemed ever to say, ‘He cometh not, he cometh not.’ ‘Ah,’ thought I, ‘what do you care about Free-trade or Reciprocity! It is Protection in the shape of a husband that *you* want.’ And indeed a happy future does not await the woman who with a loving heart and warm affections finds no one on whom to lavish them. What a volume might be written about our social martyrs!

‘Have you seen Lady Trevennis?’ I asked.

‘O yes; I saw her a few minutes ago, seated on a sofa in the conservatory talking to Lord Edgeware. O, there she is!’

I could scarcely believe my eyes, and with difficulty repressed a start. There was Lord Edgeware in the furthestmost corner of the inner room, away from the dancers, seated upright in his dandy way with his legs crossed, showing his small feet encased in black silk socks and the most delicate of shoes, and with that supercilious air which rather improved him than otherwise, listening to Lady Trevennis, who was chatting and laughing with him in her pleasantest and gayest manner. Her back was turned to me, but I could see the exquisite profile of her face lit up with animation and smiling on Lord Edgeware—yes, as I had seen her smile on me. Lord Edgeware leant back his head, and half shutting his eyes, as if the better to concentrate within his vision her

bewitching beauty, looked on her with an air half triumphant, half conceited. I felt then how deeply I hated the man. I approached them.

‘Lady Trevennis, Mr. Faynix desired me to tell you that the carriage is here.’

‘O, thank you, Mr. Disney,’ said she coldly, and with an air of hauteur that was very disagreeable to me; ‘I am sorry that you should have had the trouble of coming to tell me.’

Lord Edgeware never condescended to turn his eyes upon me, but whilst I gave my message placed his hands on his opera-hat, which rested on his lap, and stared steadily at vacancy, the expression of his face strongly resembling what he regarded. When I had finished speaking he rose up from his seat, bowed to Lady Trevennis, and offered his arm. She took it smilingly, and the next minute they were walking through

the crowd towards the staircase. She had not vouchsafed me a smile or a word.

Like many men whose nervous organisation is very sensitive, I had taken constant pains to conquer anything like emotion, and so to school myself that my feelings should never betray their real nature. I had so far succeeded, that I was generally regarded as a man of great self-possession and coolness. This self-possession society had tended considerably to increase; for I soon discovered that to appear phlegmatic, indifferent, and never astonished at anything, were signs of the best *ton*; accordingly I adopted the tone of those around me, and became as emotional and as enthusiastic as a statue. But I candidly own, the sight of Lady Trevennis and Lord Edgeware in amicable conversation after their *last* interview was too much for me. I stood for a few seconds as if dumbfounded. Thought after thought crossed

my mind, like clouds in the vault of heaven before a storm; but I could arrive at no satisfactory conclusion to account for Lady Trevennis's sudden change. And what had *I* done, that she should be cold to me? It was the first time that she had ever looked indifferently upon me; and I felt as if I had been rudely awakened from a delicious dream, or as 'a beauty feels at seeing herself for the first time caricatured.' From the day when I placed *the* letters in her hand she had never mentioned the name of Lord Edgeware but with dislike; latterly she had never alluded to him; and now suddenly to come upon her and the object of her dislike seated together in the most friendly manner and chatting as if nothing had ever interrupted the harmony of their intercourse! It was incomprehensible and utterly beyond my solution.

I soon, however, recovered from the shock, and followed Lady Trevennis and her

companion. I descended the staircase, and saw Lord Edgeware in the hall, evidently waiting to escort Lady Trevennis to her carriage. In another second she issued from the library shawled and cloaked, and taking Lord Edgeware's arm, walked to her carriage. As she entered the landau I heard her whisper to him '*Bons amis?*' and he replied '*Si.*' His lordship greeted Mr. Faynix, some small-talk passed between them; and then the virtuous peer bowed most politely to Mr. Faynix, kissed his hand to Lady Trevennis, and went back again to the house. I entered the carriage, and we drove off.

Mr. Faynix and his daughter talked together for a few moments about different people, and among them about Lord Edgeware. My patron was perfectly ignorant evidently, from the nature of his remarks, that Edgeware and his daughter had ever quarrelled; and as for Lady Trevennis, she was self-

possession itself. I leant back, and spoke not a word to either; my thoughts were quite sufficient food for reflection. As we passed through —— square the carriage rolled over some soft noiseless tan in front of the house of one of the wealthiest and most luxurious men of the day. Mr. Faynix looked through the open window at the house.

‘So poor Mayfair is dead! died this morning at 9. Poor fellow! what dinners he gave! Ah, we shall never see such an *Amphitryon* again. By the way, Helen, when you call upon Lady Mayfair, I wish you would ask her what she is going to do with Mayfair’s *maraschino*, and I should strongly recommend you to buy it up if you can—h’m?’

‘If I find a convenient opportunity, I will mention it to her,’ replied she abstractedly.

I looked up at the splendid mansion, and

thought of him, that witty worldly peer, now a corpse. What valued *now* his ancient lineage, his high-sounding titles, his vast estates, his splendid fortune? He had died a tolerably old man; but what mattered now how long he had lived before that awful question, *how* had he lived? What had his peerless fortune ever done, but to gratify his vicious unruly taste? Who ever saw his name connected with anything that was noble or generous or good? Was it for *such* a life that he was born to honour and distinction? Ah, the veriest peasant, that starves on bread and an onion, need envy his lordship *now* no longer.

And then the thought crossed my mind, Why not quit this atmosphere of vanity and selfish scheming, of scandal and pitiless cynicism, of weariness and disappointment, of vicious artificiality and sensual enjoyment, which is called society, and go again to my

garret, and work and paint for distinction, and be a *man*, and not a social puppet, that moves and walks and has its being according to the views of other people, never daring to be independent of false opinions, false morality, and false distinctions? My conscience said, Quit it. Ah, had I but obeyed its dictates!

On arriving at Double Zero House, a foreign letter was placed in Lady Trevennis' hands, which seemed greatly to annoy her. She hastily took it from the servant, and walked upstairs.

I went to my room, and was soon afterwards followed by Mr. Faynix. The statesman sat down in an easy-chair, and dictated the heads of several matters he wanted me to look up for him. Mr. Faynix had the reputation of being a very well-informed man, and the easy way he acquired his reputation amused me very much. He had

the knack of talking in a popular way about subjects of which a day ago he was totally ignorant. He would simply tell me to get certain books on any subject he was going to speak about, and to make extracts and mark certain passages; and then he would rapidly acquire the necessary information, go down to the House, and make a speech, which would interest everybody, and cause his audience to think, 'What a clever man that fellow Faynix is!' whilst perhaps the very man from whom Faynix borrowed all his information might rise in his place in the House and be coughed down, or left speaking to empty benches and tired reporters! Success is *not* always a sign of merit. Mr. Faynix and his under-secretary, Mr. Whitehed Sepel-Karr, were, however, the best hands at this kind of game in the House.

After half an hour Mr. Faynix left me,

and I was about to smoke a cigar before going to bed, when Annette, Lady Trevennis' French maid, said that her ladyship wished to see me in her boudoir.

Occasionally, when returning from a late ball, Mr. Faynix and I used to go up to Lady Trevennis' sanctuary, and have a cup of tea and a chat about the events of the day before retiring; and so the request was nothing very extraordinary.

I went upstairs, knocked at the door, and entered the apartment sacred to the hostess of Double Zero House. It was an oval room, splendidly furnished, and opened into the conservatory. The walls were draped with fluted pink satin, with at intervals broad white satin panels trimmed with lace. Fitting into each of these panels were some beautiful water-colour drawings; and above some of the pictures and on the buhl cabinets and marquetric tables were copies,

exquisitely done in marble, of the most graceful statues of antiquity. I noticed particularly the Greek Antinous, with his drooped head and full smooth limbs, and a charming copy of the Graces. Half buried in an ottoman was a crayon sketch of Lady Trevennis' classic face and bust; it was very well done, and I wondered in what chamber of his brain the gifted artist had found the beautiful drapery in which he had drawn her. The room was profusely lighted, but the light from the different lamps came softened through the thinnest alabaster, and shed a soft voluptuous moonlight about the chamber.

The room was deserted, but from the open davenport and the paper on it I could see that Lady Trevennis had been writing. I approached the crayon picture, and kneeling down before the lovely portrait, pressed its lips to mine. I was aroused from my act of sentimental homage by a soft hand pass-

ing over my head and gently lingering on my neck, whilst Lady Trevennis' voice said, 'Poor boy!—poor Harry!' I started to my feet, colouring violently. She had entered, unknown to me, through a mirrored door behind me, which led into the drawing-room overlooking the gardens.

Lady Trevennis sat down on the ottoman beside me, and there played over her beautiful face so heavenly a smile, there shone from her eyes so kindly a light as she looked at me, that I could hardly believe that she was the same woman as the haughty lady of an hour and a half ago.

'My cousin, you must leave us!' said she softly, and placing her hand kindly on my arm.

'Leave you!—why?' I asked, astonished.

'Because, poor boy! you have let me into your secret—' She dropped her voice: 'You love me, Harry!'

‘What reason have you for supposing this? Have I ever shown you by my conduct that you have any grounds for suspecting me of what can only be an insult to yourself?’ I replied evasively.

‘No, never; else I should not be talking to you as I now do. But think you it requires more than a woman’s ordinary perception to know when she is beloved? I respect you for having so well concealed your feelings towards me; for, as you rightly say, the expression of such feelings would have ill become you, and have been an insult to me. But still, for all that, not the less do you love me, and I have noticed it for some little time. Indeed, had I wanted stronger proof, what I have just seen would be quite sufficient to convince me that I am correct in what I say. Pure platonic love, that you have so often talked about (and my knowledge of the world scarcely permits me to

place much faith in such an affection), does not kneel down before a picture of the object of its cold esteem, and kiss it passionately, devotedly. Men who love, not as Plato advises, but as Cupid prompts them, do that. You are one of my race on your mother's side, and ice-water has never run in our veins. It requires a colder, less imaginative temperament than yours to preserve for long within its present bounds your attachment to me. You see, I talk to you frankly, and I hope kindly, for I sincerely feel for you.'

We were silent for a few moments, and then I said :

'You are right, Lady Trevennis; I *do* love you—and love you as deeply and as purely as man ever loved. But you mistake me, if you think that it is beyond my power to continue restraining the devotion I have towards you within its present limits. I look upon you as the realisation of that

ideal which so often haunted my brain. To me you are Nature's best picture of woman's beauty. As an artist, I worship you ; as a man, to whom you have shown attention and kindness, I—yes ! love you ; but I love you only as a sister : solemnly I swear to you no other love has entered my heart. Why, then, ask me to leave you ?

Lady Trevennis shook her head.

‘My cousin, your stay here for long is impossible. Your own sense must show you it is wiser and better that you should quit us, especially after what you have just said.’

‘Have I offended you by my words—in-deed I meant no offence?’ I asked quickly.

‘Offended me ! No. Mine is the fault, in supposing that a man like yourself could live constantly under my roof without feeling something more than friendship for me. I am to blame, and my selfishness is at the bottom of all. I saw in you a man very

different from those I meet in society ; your career and our relationship interested me ; you have done me a great service ; and proved in various ways that you study my wishes, and are worthy of the confidence I repose in you ; and therefore I feel bound to you by ties of friendship and gratitude, and did I but consult my own feelings, I should ask you to remain.'

'Then consult your own feelings and let me remain,' I interrupted pleadingly.

'What you ask is impossible. The more you do *not* wish to go, the more I see the advisability that you *should* go. And, Harry, let us say no more words about this. After knowing what I do about the state of your feelings, it is not fair to you to encourage it by asking you to remain here. Let the subject, therefore, drop for the present. I have asked Mr. Vielledame, the Secretary for Causing Internal Disturbances, to get you

one of the Art Inspectorships; and he has promised me the next vacant one, which he expects will be in about another month; till then stay here with us. But this conversation is a digression from what I wish to say; for I did not ask you to come to me just now to tell you this: only as I saw you pay that little act of homage to my portrait there—how inferior to yours!—I thought it high time to—'

'Give me a month's warning,' said I sadly. 'But to what, then, do I owe the honour of being asked to intrude my unworthy self upon your presence?'

The gist of the conversation that ensued was this.

Lady Trevennis wanted me to hold myself in readiness to go to Paris at any given moment, upon a secret mission which I was to divulge to no one. The nature of this mission she did not tell me, and I was

to pledge my word not to attempt to inquire into it from those to whom I might be sent. All I was to do was to deliver some letters, perhaps bring back an answer, and to be no more acquainted with the contents of the documents I carried than a Foreign-office messenger or a penny postman.

I promised faithfully to do what she wished, and not to allow for a moment my curiosity to enter into the question.

It was to know whether I would consent to do this that she had sent for me, as she had to answer immediately a letter, whose reply would depend upon my accepting or refusing what she proposed.

She thanked me most warmly for granting her request; and I was in hopes, when she found how serviceable I was to her, that she would think twice before she gave me my *congé* as tutor to her son, and secretary to her father.

As I rose up to quit her, I said :

‘And so you are friends again with Lord Edgeware ?’

‘O, yes,’ she replied carelessly ; ‘he was very sorry for the past, and it does not do to cherish malice.’

‘Especially when we are readily inclined to forgive. It is astonishing how christian we become when it suits us. But permit me to say, I am very sorry that you and he are friends again. I have no faith in him ; and I believe him to be as treacherous and as dangerous a man as you could ever meet.’

‘O, I think you are mistaken. I do not consider him such now ; I have been very much deceived about him.’

‘But surely, Lady Trevennis, you cannot call Lord Edgeware an improving companion ?’

‘O, if I were only to know improving

companions, my list of friends would be very limited, and I should have to give up society altogether, I fear,' said she, laughing.

'I suppose, however, you can hardly be ignorant of the character that Lord Edgeware bears?'

'I am not ignorant of it; but I fear, if I were to inquire into the character of any man, I should find him not much better.'

'I differ from you. Excuse me, however, making these remarks; but as I obtained your letters from Lord Edgeware in a manner certainly most discreditable to myself, and as my only reasons for so doing were to oblige you and to sever for ever your intimacy with him, I thought that I was to a certain extent privileged to say what I have.'

'O, I was very hasty at Weedoncliffe about Lord Edgeware, and I am very sorry that I spoke so severely against him. Be-

sides, he is so much *the fashion*, and it would be impossible and very awkward for me to—ah, not know him.'

'Ah!' thought I, as I went back to my room, 'what matters honour or fair fame, so long as you are *the fashion*!'





CHAPTER IV.

MR. O'FLAHERTY.

'Magna est humbug, et prævalebit.'



THE first of July was the day appointed for the great fête of the season, the Trevennis Tournament, and we were now in the last fortnight of June. Nothing was talked about in society but the novelty of the entertainment, and all Lady Trevennis' friends said that if it were a success, and they had no reason to expect otherwise, it would most certainly establish Lady Trevennis as the popular leader of London fashion. At Double Zero House we had been as busy as bees for the last five weeks in sending out cards of invi-

tation, drawing up programmes, and holding incessant consultations with Sir Burr Lesque, the eminent antiquary and architect, who had the sole management of the arrangements of the Tournament. Lady Trevennis, Mrs. M'Mushroom, and the Duchess of Whistine were continually driving down to Eden Lodge to superintend the progress of affairs, and to suggest various improvements to Sir Burr. The Duke of Rohan had kindly offered Moor Park, which joined on the west side the grounds of Eden Lodge, to Lady Trevennis for the occasion of her fête, and allowed Sir Burr to do what he liked in the way of erecting tents, &c.

One day I had just returned from Whitehall, and was going to my room to write some letters, when I met little Reggie in the hall. A tall elderly-looking man, with well-cut features and a bronzed weather-beaten complexion, was standing by him,

with his arm round the little fellow's neck. He was dressed rather in the old-fogey style—loose open coat with large outside pockets, double-breasted buff waistcoat, high blue-and-white neckcloth, large white beaver hat, and light trousers strapped over gaitered boots; and looked altogether as if he should never be seen out of ——'s bow window. Reggie came up to me, and said,

‘O, Mr. Disney, here's papa.’

The old gentleman came forward, made a profound bow, as if he were an emperor receiving an ambassador, and then shook me warmly by the hand.

Had I not been prejudiced against Sir John, I should have taken a strong fancy to him. I liked his genial kindly face, his blue eyes, and his gentle courteous manner in addressing me. But he was the husband of her whom I passionately idolised, and, what was far worse, her unappreciative hus-

band. I had heard enough in the world to find out that Newton was right in one respect—that the married life of Sir John and Lady Trevennis was not a happy one. I exonerated Lady Trevennis, of course, from all blame, and attributed everything that was bad to her husband. And looking on Sir John in this point of view, I regarded his kindness as plausibility, and his geniality as hypocrisy. ‘O, you polished sea monster,’ thought I, ‘what would I give to be in your shoes and be the husband of the fairest woman in England! And yet you do not care about her, while I am forced to leave this roof for fear that I should care too much for her. O, irony of human love!’

We had a little chat together; and then the father and son, both looking so delighted in each other's society, went out for a drive.

During my leisure time I had written

in an art-journal a series of articles on Turner, which were about to be given to the world in the form of a little book. It was a somewhat difficult task, for Mr. Ruskin, with the usual absorbing egotism of men of genius, had so made himself the representative of the whole mass of Turner's admirers, and said so much and said it so well, that it became very hard for me to write anything about the landscape painter without seeming to plagiarise from the great critic. I hoped, however, that I had said something which other art-critics had left unsaid; and as the articles had created some slight sensation in the artist world, I thought it not unadvisable to publish them.

Like most young authors, I was anxious that the press should not 'come down upon me;' and though I cared very little for what the art-critics (generally men who exchanged the brush for the pen, owing to the cold

neglect of 'the dealers') wrote in their papers on my pictures, I was very sensitive about opinions, now that I was turning author.

Whilst painting at Rome, I had made the acquaintance of a Mr. O'Flaherty, who was then the special correspondent of the *Mixobarbarus*; a charming paper, which, at that time, achieved great distinction owing to its false morality, venality, and manufactured erudition. At the end of six months this gentleman had quitted Rome for London, and was now a celebrated character and 'a man of the time.' He was the only son of an Irish clergyman, who after a career of distinction at the Queen's University, had succeeded in obtaining two excellent scholarships at Balliol, which sufficed to carry him comfortably through Oxford.

On quitting the University, he was called to the bar at the Inner Temple; but finding

that, notwithstanding his First Class in Law and Modern History, solicitors' visits were few and far between, he betook himself to that great refuge of the unsuccessful forensic mind—literature.

On his return from Rome, and after one or two failures, he wrote a very clever novel, which raised him at once to notice. And O'Flaherty was not the man to attract attention without that attention winning for him at the same time the solid advantages of pecuniary profit. Some brilliant letters that he wrote in the *Trimmer*, signed R. S. V. P., on several social subjects then universally discussed, were the climax of his *bonnes fortunes*. He became permanently engaged on its influential staff; and his letters, signed R. S. V. P., written on international law, marriage, the demi-monde, ritualism, or gamekeepers' fees, were regarded by the public mind with the same respect and

consideration as those of the most brilliant writers of the day, who occasionally, through the medium of the *Trimmer*, kindly advised the Law Officers of the Crown how to legislate, the Estates of the Realm how to act, and Society generally how to behave.

Writing two novels a year, together with reviews, and his ever-appearing one-columned letters, O'Flaherty not only found his time fully occupied, but himself in the receipt of a hard-earned but by no means contemptible income. He was now about thirty-five, tall, good-looking, and with that air of self-satisfaction which successful men so often reflect.

O'Flaherty had kindly said that he would be very glad to do me a service, should it ever be in his power; and though I had not seen him since the change in my fortunes, it is astonishing how friendly a man becomes all of a sudden when he wants to get some-

thing out of another. I thought I could not do better than to walk down to Dryden's buildings, Temple, and ask him to give me advice, and perhaps get my little book a favourable review or two; for he was now editor of one of the best papers of the day. As I ascended the dark tortuous staircase, I heard his deep rough voice through his open door addressing some one in tones of admonition:

‘ Mrs. Jones, I am perfectly aware that spasms are a most painful complaint, and that epileptic fits are a fearful visitation; but still I must beg of you not to look upon my chambers as a dispensary. This is the third bottle of brandy that has disappeared this week; and from my slight acquaintance with your eccentricities respecting the appropriation of other people's goods, I must lay their disappearance at your door. I have forgiven you often before; but I warn you now for

the last time. Let this occur again, and I shall report you to the Treasurer; and not all your pleas about your husband being in the London Hospital and your babe at the breast will serve as excuses. Now, don't answer me; good-morning !'

I waited till the domestic purloiner had descended the staircase, and then knocked at his door.

'Come in !'

I entered; and though it was in the afternoon, Mr. O'Flaherty was only just going to breakfast. Our meeting was cordial, and he asked me to join him in his meal; which I declined, on the very satisfactory ground that I generally breakfasted at nine, and that I had just lunched.

'Ah, happy man! it is a long time since I breakfasted at the customary hour. Being editor and manager of the *Spotless* is no joke, I can assure you. Up all night

working like a slave, go to bed when other people are rising, and breakfast with the first issue of your evening edition,—that is my fate! By the way, I have to congratulate you, not only on your picture, but on your coming out as a great swell. Sit down and take a weed—have anything to drink?—and let us talk over old times whilst I breakfast.'

We chattered away over old associations and new ideas for some little time, and then O'Flaherty handed me a newspaper, and apologised for having to read some letters.

'Ah!' said he, opening three or four, 'see what a literary man has daily to endure!'—and he read: 'Dear Sir,—Being fully aware of the kindness of your sentiments and of your well-known liberality, I take the liberty of asking you for a subscription to—' 'Ah! that's soon disposed of. I keep all my sentiments for my leading

articles, and my liberality for my waste-paper basket!' and he threw the begging-letter writer's petition into that receptacle. And then he took up another, which ran thus :

' Conservative Club, Tuesday.

' My dear O'Flaherty,—Could you get me a box for next Friday at the Hay-market? I want to take some people from the country, who are dying to see Western. If you could oblige me in this, I should feel ever grateful, as I am infernally hard up just at present, owing to "Polly Snooks" cutting up so awfully bad last week at New-market.

' Ever yours,

' ALFRED LACKALL.

' P.S.—Why don't you come and dine with me?'

' Why don't I?' said O'Flaherty, putting

the letter on one side, whilst a dry smile overspread his face; 'for the best of all reasons: because you never ask me, except interrogatively. Appoint a given day, and I shall be vara glad to accept your invitation; but you're hardly the mon to be pleased at my inviting myself, I take it. Now for number three!'

' Foreign Office, Monday morning.

' Dear O'Flaherty,—I just write a line to say, that if it is not convenient for you to grant me a favour, I trust in future you will be good enough to say so. The stalls you gave me for last Saturday were not numbered; and the result was, that we were placed in the very last row of all, with a projecting buttress in front that prevented us most effectually from seeing anything. This was very anoying, especially as I gave them to some people to whom I wanted

to be civil. I fancy they won't particularly care to be escorted by me again to a theatre gratis. I am very sorry I troubled you, and in future will spare your granting me any farther favours (?).

‘Yours truly,

‘H. C. TOADY-TRAP.’

‘Well, that's gratitude, at all events ! I have a great mind to take my revenge by reporting him to his chief for spelling annoying with one *n*.’

‘Estover Hall, Glumlyn, Herts,

‘June 18, 18—.

‘My dear O'Flaherty, — I hope you haven't forgotten your promise to come down here in August for some shooting. Mrs. Scruple will be delighted to make your acquaintance. I want to know whether you would do me a great favour ? You

see I say, *would* do me, not *could* do me, because it is in your power. I have just written a book on Ornithology ; would you give me a review in your paper, and just exercise your powerful interest to have it well reviewed in some of the leading weeklies ? Newspaper criticisms are such capital vehicles for the sale of a book—far better than advertisements, and much cheaper. I know you can do this, if you wish ; and I hope you will wish it, for the sake of auld lang syne at Balliol. I could write the criticism myself, if you are too busy.

‘ Yours ever kindly,

‘ FREDK. SCRUPLE.’

‘ O, stainless purity of the fourth estate !’
cried O’Flaherty, laughing.

I thought this a good opportunity to avail myself of ; so I said :

‘ I have just written a little work on

Turner's pictures, and, like Mr. Scruple, I wish to have it well reviewed. You are editor of the new paper the *Spotless*, are you not?

‘Yes, I have that honour. How do you like its name? A very good one, I think. I christened it so, because our proprietor is a Greek *and* a solicitor (the combination of his nationality and profession is at once a guarantee for the purity and integrity of his newspaper!); because we are subsidised by the French Government for 1500*l.* a-year; because we only favourably review the works of those publishers who advertise freely in our columns, and adopt the same rule with regard to the plays of stage-managers; and, in fact, because we are the venal servants of a mercenary party. There, don't you think our organ deserves its name?’


‘O, undoubtedly. And you will kindly

review my book? It is my first child, and I am very sensitive about it.'

'Certainly; what is it about, did you say?'

'A series of criticisms on Turner's pictures, which appeared in the *Artists' Journal*,' replied I.

'O, on art, is it? Well, that's rather a bore, for M'Neale writes all the critiques in the *Spotless* on works on the fine arts; and as he was an unsuccessful artist, and wrote a book on English painting which "the trade" wouldn't accept, he is tolerably savage when he comes across the productions of successful artists or books on art. But I know what I'll do; I'll review it myself! I have about as much idea of art as a bishop has of humility; and I don't think I ever saw a Turner in my life; but as ignorance is one of the chief qualifications for the office of a critic, I shall be a most competent



one in this instance. You have written a preface, I suppose ?

‘O yes, a very long one.’

‘That’s all right. With the aid of a good preface and an encyclopædia, I’ll undertake to write a criticism on any work in the world, from an Anglo-Saxon chronicle to a Hebrew grammar. Nothing like a good preface ; for then you have only to take all your ideas from the writer, alter them as it suits you ; and when you have reproduced them so as to make your article readable, wind up by praising or damning the author, according to the state of your liver or the bother he has given you.’

‘That is certainly an easy way of giving an opinion on a book,’ said I, laughing.

‘Yes, it is easy, I own it ; and the older you grow, me boy, the more you’ll find out that one of the great principles of life is to save yourself trouble.’

'O, all very well; but such a proceeding is not criticism,' said I.

'Criticism, me boy! Faith, what are you talking about! Do you think a critic means a man who knows his subject as well as the writer of the book he reviews, or one who can throw any original light upon it? Of course not. All the critic does is to derive his information from the work he pretends to judge—just like the Abyssinian, as somebody says, who cuts out steaks from the cattle he drives—and then to put into grammatical English (and sometimes not even into that) the remarks and ideas of the writer as his own. It is a task more mechanical than intellectual, and one that is paid so badly that only very young men— young barristers and young curates (they're the boys to cut one up in fine style!)— or else men who have tried the more remunerative branches of literature without

success, care to undertake its hack-like duties.'

'If that be the case, criticism must have very little weight.'

'And so it has. The people who don't buy books believe in reviews with the most refreshing simplicity; but publishers and booksellers, &c., and those who *do* buy books, look upon the opinions of the press as only something better than advertisements. I know, before I made my "hit" with my novel, nothing could be more eulogistic than the criticisms upon my books; and it was with a feeling of great satisfaction that I read from the *Mutual Adorer*, under the publishers' advertisements of my wares, that "this novel is well conceived and well written. Mr. O'Flaherty is always interesting and original; he invariably thinks for himself, and puts his thoughts with a force and beauty that often rise into


true eloquence. *Cardiff Castle* has our warmest commendation," and suchlike notices, which I had either written myself or dictated to a friend; but they didn't make my books sell. Now that I have made a name, and risen to the editorship of the *Spotless*, my novels are abused by the press (nothing creates hate like success); but they sell well, for all that. No, me boy; the only critic you need care about is the public: if that is for you, all the abuse of the fourth estate will do you no harm—on the contrary, it will rather do you good; for the world always thinks there is something in a man when the papers take the trouble to cry him down.'

'Then you deny that criticisms of the press are advantages to an author?'

'Of course they are advantages, inasmuch as they are better and fuller, and occupy a more prominent position, than ad-

vertisements. But if you tell me that a silly book well reviewed will sell, or a clever book hostilely reviewed will be a failure,—all I say is, that my experience tells me the contrary. Men of the world know what “opinions of the press” mean, and appreciate them accordingly. The simple truth is, that the age of criticism has passed. The power of the press lies nowadays in the expression of its *political* opinions; for it is the organ through which the educated classes assert their right to political influence, and make that influence felt. As such, it is a power which no minister can afford to ignore or to pass by with contempt. Politics have now taken the place of the literary criticism of former times. In the days of *the* critics—the Jeffreys, the Giffords, the Broughams, the Leigh Hunts, the Hazlitts, the Macaulays, &c.—

politics were in the hands of a clique, borough-mongering was rampant, and the middle classes and the people were excluded from the franchise. Hence the masses cared very little for what we call politics, and took a great interest in contemporary literature; and as books were written by the few, the critics had time to review, and *not* to merely summarise, as they do nowadays. But when the people took an active interest in politics, it was found that they wanted to be guided in their political opinions, and not in their literary taste; so the exclusively critical reviews died away, and gave place to the newspapers. And then, as newspapers increased, and politics became more and more engrossing, the critic's trade began to vanish; till at last it has degenerated into the practising ground for young men to air their English, or the refuge for the unsuccessful and splenetic.



Besides, nowadays, when a book is noticed, all the reviews upon it vary so, that the public are fairly bewildered, and at last end by deciding for themselves. One critic says, that "Mr. Jones's style is always brilliant and agreeable; he has the grace of Addison, the satire of Swift, the wit of Rabelais without his coarseness, and the exquisite imagery of Milton clothed in the rhetoric of Macaulay. We predict for this work a decided success; it should lie upon every drawing-room table." This is evidently written by a young friend to whom Jones has been useful—lent him money, or got him a government appointment, or put him on a paper, or some such favour. Another critic says: "Mr. Jones is under the impression that he can write English, and that the brilliant emanations of his powerful intellect tend to enrich contemporary literature. We beg, as a candid friend, to

undecieve him. He has as much idea of the rules of composition as a penny-a-liner has of conciseness. His literary efforts, when not ungrammatical, are weak, vapid, and offensive. He mistakes invective for satire, vulgarity for wit, and the flowery passages of a tailor's advertisement for fine writing. The book contains a good deal of what is termed "high life," and we have no doubt will be read with interest in the kitchen. It should lie on every dresser-table." This is *not* written by a friend, but by a man who hates Jones because he has married a rich wife, and lives in Hyde-park; while the critic lives in Camden-town, and his wife keeps a mangle instead of a carriage; or for some such cause, which has jealousy for its basis.'

'But if a good deal of the criticism at the present day is either the cringing flattery of a friend or the malignant abuse of

an enemy, it shows a most unprincipled state of things,' said I.

'O, principle, me boy, is all very well for individuals; but for collective bodies, such as governments, city companies, corporations, or newspapers, it is out of the question. When you are one of a lot, you must do as the lot does; and when you have seen a little more of the world, you'll find that wherever you roam human nature revolves on the axis of self-interest, between the poles of humbug and venality.'

'But why don't you, as editor of the *Spotless*, introduce a new order of things, and try to reform the press?'

'Have you ever tried to time eternity, to measure space, to ride up the Matterhorn on a jackass, or to make a statesman perform what he promised? When you have tried to do any of these trifling tasks, then you will be a fit person to reform the

press. But how, Mr. Clever, would you begin ?

‘Why, I would only have really competent critics on my paper, in the first place,’ said I.

‘And in the second place, suppose “really competent critics” prefer writing novels or plays, and working for the publishers or stage-managers, than for their two or three guineas a week from the newspaper proprietor—what then ?’

‘Well, I would pay them handsomely, and make it worth their while to write for me.’

‘All very well ; but suppose the proprietor says, “I won’t pay more than I have been accustomed. Reviews are all ’umbug, and I only put ’em in just to please the booksellers and stage-managers, as a return for their advertisements. No ; pay your leading-article writer, your sensational correspondents, and your City man—pay ’em

well; but as for the critics, dammy, they do precious little good or harm to a paper." That's what *my* proprietor says; and we must abide by what he wishes. We keep three critics—an art critic, a dramatic critic, and a miscellaneous critic. The last is a versatile genius! Here, in our edition of yesterday, you'll see sixteen books reviewed—there they are! Works on theology, botany, metaphysics, mathematics, two novels, a Hebrew grammar, a German dictionary, an annotated edition of the Vedas, &c. Well, our miscellaneous critic reviewed them all! Praised some here, damned some there; and, *entre nous*, I don't believe he ever looked any farther into the contents than the title-page.'

'Well,' said I, laughing, 'I must leave the press to you; for if criticism is conducted on such principles, I shall not trouble my head one way or the other about it. The

critics may praise my book or abuse it, for what I care.'

'That's right. I'll give you a good "crack up," so that your publisher can copy two or three lines out of it to put under his advertisements, and that's all you really want. Men see reviews for a day or a week, and then forget them; but advertisements stare them in the face all through the season. Advertisements are everything nowadays, and constitute half the secret of commercial success.'

And then our conversation turned on irrelevant matters. At the end of half an hour I took my leave, O'Flaherty promising to dine with me next week at the 'New Mixture.'





CHAPTER V.

MOOR PARK.

'Where throngs of knights and barons bold
In weeds of peace high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace whom all commend.'

AT last the day big with the fate of the Trevennis Tournament arrived. For the last few weeks nothing had been talked of but the great event. The novelty of the entertainment, the magnificence of the appointments, and the costly splendour in which everything was to be conducted, were topics in everybody's mouth. As day by day the preparations approached nearer and nearer to com-

pletion, the newspapers sent reporters down to Moor Park and Eden Lodge to furnish accounts of the arrangements for the princely festivities. For a whole fortnight before the commencement of the Tournament the public were kept informed by the papers of the progress in the erection of the pavilions and marquees in Moor Park; of the manner in which the tilting-ground was planned; of the splendid galleries in the grand stand, which were to contain ten thousand visitors; of the throne for the Queen of Beauty; and of the consummate taste in which the grounds of Eden Lodge were laid out. The illustrated periodicals were full of sketches and pictures of the armour that was to be worn by the different knights, of the tabards of the heralds, of the gonfalons, of the dresses of the ladies who were to attend on Lady Trevennis, and of the costumes of the halberdiers



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To win her grace whom all commend.'

AT last the day big with the fate of the Trevennis Tournament arrived. For the last few weeks nothing had been talked of but the great event. The novelty of the entertainment, the magnificence of the appointments, and the costly splendour in which everything was to be conducted, were topics in everybody's mouth. As day by day the preparations approached nearer and nearer to com-

procession, and of having to answer the numerous letters from ladies containing suggestions. Without exaggeration, I had little rest either day or night during that time.

It was amusing to see the interest society took in the affair. The competition among the women to take part in the procession was as keen as the competition among the men for the posts of knights and esquires. At last, after frequent boudoir councils, letters, and debates, the programme of the Tournament was finally drawn up, and the coveted posts allotted to the different competitors. By unanimous consent it was agreed that the Duke of Rohan should be Lord of the Tournament. He was an old friend of Sir John's, and to his kindness in allowing the entertainment to take place in his park much of its anticipated success would undoubtedly be due. His Grace was in the prime of life, and one of the most

splendid men of his time. He stood about six feet four; but so magnificently was he proportioned, that there was nothing inharmonious or out of keeping in his tremendous height. His powerful shoulders and his stalwart limbs were the envy of every prizefighter and athlete in the kingdom; and when the Duke, as the Marquess of Whitehall, held a commission in the First Life, his appearance at the head of his troop was a sight that would have made Goliath weep with envy, and Hercules hide his diminished head. He was indeed a splendid man, and his moral qualities were in perfect harmony with those of his *physique*. Kind, brave, and in the highest sense of the word a thorough gentleman, he was in every respect a most fit man for the post of honour in the coming Tournament. It was his Grace's province to superintend the armoury department, and to drill the various knights

and esquires into their duties. And as I saw him practising in the closely shaven well-rolled tilting-ground, I pitied the opponent who would have to receive the shock of *his* lance.


Sir John Trevennis was to occupy the distinguished but unimportant post of King of the Tournament; and as the old sailor was a most attentive and courtly host, though somewhat rough, he was a decided acquisition. By the universal consent of all the knights, Lady Trevennis was to be enthroned as the Queen of Beauty. At first she declined, deeming it bad taste for her, the hostess of the entertainment, to occupy so prominent and invidious a position, and had therefore offered the royal seat with charming grace to her social enemy and rival the Marchioness of St. James; but that lady politely refused. Lady Trevennis had, therefore, no alternative but to obey

the wishes of her knights, as it was universally admitted that she and Lady St. James were the two prettiest women at that time in London. Twelve of the fairest and highest born of England's daughters were to be her attendant maids of honour. The Knight Marshal of the Lists was of course to be Sir Burr Lesque, whose duty it was to lay down the law to all anent the duties of chivalry.

Lady Trevennis had resolved that the Tournament should not be merely a party affair, but, on the contrary, a splendid festivity, at which almost every one who had any claim to social pretensions should be invited. Cards had been sent out to all the leading members of the aristocracy, from the Princes of the Blood to the latest cotton-spinner who had sold his conscience and his votes for a barony. By nearly all the invitations had been accepted; and

as for the Duchesses and Countesses, from the great Duchess of Whistine downwards, they were enchanted at the idea of exhibiting themselves in dresses of unwonted splendour and magnificence; for the order of the entertainment was, that all those guests who were invited to appear in the middle galleries of the grand stand, and who intended assisting at the ball in the evening, were to come in costume. You can therefore imagine that weeks before the great event society was in a perpetual state of preparation; and the court milliners were so overworked, that the mortality among their dressmakers during that time exceeded about thrice its ordinary rate.

All the women were vieing with each other to obtain the most charming and the most expensive of costumes; and the innumerable letters to 'Dear Sir Burr,' asking for his advice in the matter, were enough



to send that distinguished antiquary out of his mind. The men were quite as bad ; and the discussions they held with their tailors, theatrical costumiers, and among themselves, occupied all their abilities and all their time.

Nearly three thousand cards of invitation had been sent out by Sir John and Lady Trevennis to the more prominent members of the aristocracy, landed gentry, and the various professions. Out of these three thousand, two hundred were privileged guests, who were to occupy the middle galleries, and to be present at the banquet and ball. The Tournament was to last three days, and each day a different two hundred were to be the privileged guests of their munificent host and hostess. Each day different knights were to engage in warlike combat ; and in fact, the whole affair was to be as varied as possible.

There were to be no monotonous repetitions, no dull tiresome exhibitions; but everything was to be novel, gay, and free from boredom.

The first day of the Tournament was ushered in by the brightest and most splendid of summer mornings. Not a cloud flecked the deep-blue vault of heaven, and the sun shone with a brilliancy worthy of Mediterranean climes.

The guests were invited to assemble by one o'clock; but long before that time the galleries apportioned to the two thousand eight hundred visitors were crowded, and so was also far the greater part of the exclusive middle galleries.

It was my duty to act as steward round the throne of the Queen of Beauty, and to show the various distinguished guests their reserved chairs. It was a most agreeable office, and one that every minute afforded me

new interest by the sight of some beauteous face, or still more beauteous toilette.

I was dressed in a Venetian costume of black velvet, with the collar turned over with white satin. Conscious that my dress became me, that I was looking very handsome, and that my legs exhibited their well-turned calves and ankles to advantage in their black silk hose, I swaggered about the avenue between the seats, with my velvet cap placed jauntily on one side, as proud as a cornet in his new uniform, or a volunteer captain at a levée.

As the hour of one o'clock approached there was a buzz of expectation among the well-dressed crowd, and every eye was strained towards Eden Lodge; for at that hour the procession was to start from the Lodge to the tilting-ground.

‘Do you think the procession will start punctually, Mr. Disney?’ asked a fair lady

of me as I was swaggering about my 'Fops' alley.'

She was a Lady Charles Marathon, and a great leader of the evangelical world. She was most gorgeously dressed in a saya of ruby velvet, with the armorial bearings of her house in front, a jacket of cloth-of-gold, and a mantle of violet velvet furred with minever. On her hands were gauntlets fretted with gold. She was looking exceedingly handsome, and as pleased as if an archbishop had consented to take the chair at one of her drawing-room conversaziones.

'I believe so,' replied I. 'Permit me to congratulate you on your costume, Lady Charles. It is the most effective that I have yet seen.'

'Really! you like it?' said she, colouring with pleasure; for the approval of an artist in such matters is always considered a compliment.

‘Exceedingly,’ said I, as I sat down by her side for a moment.

Lady Charles and I were great friends. I liked her, because she was the most graceful and agreeable of hypocrites; and she liked me, because I meekly resigned myself to being bored once a week by attending her conversaziones. In the evangelical world young men of good social position are very scarce at religious ‘drawing-rooms,’ and thoroughly appreciated when they attend. In high-church society it is different, for there the ‘priest’ is everything; but in the low-church world the sacerdotal power is chiefly, though indirectly, exercised by women.

We sat chatting pleasantly for a few minutes, Lady Charles as charming and worldly as possible. In conversation she often forgot her *rôle* of a religious leader till something reminded her, when she would all of a sudden change her tone and make some

lugubrious remark, such as, 'We all are dust and ashes' (gold-dust and highly ornamental ashes, thought I, as I looked at her splendid dress); or 'That everything was vanity,' &c.

This change from gay remarks to grave she made just now, while talking to me. She had been criticising the dresses and general appearance of her neighbours to me, as only a woman can criticise who knows that she is dressed to perfection, and that in face and figure she is all that can be desired. But now, after taking a comprehensive glance at everything around her—at the gorgeously well-dressed crowd, the tilting-ground, the waving banners, and the gaily-coloured pavilions in the distance—she said to me, very gravely :

' Ah, Mr. Disney, after all, this splendid entertainment is only vanity of vanities ; do you not think so ?'

' When I am talking to Lady Charles,

I can only think—of Lady Charles,’ replied I, bowing.

‘Now pray be serious, you are so dreadfully flippant. It is a solemn thought to think that,’ said she, smelling her scent-bottle, ‘all flesh is grass.’

‘It is a most solemn thought; and perhaps that is the reason why we continue to make hay whilst the sun shines,’ replied I, very gravely.

‘Ah, you are gay and thoughtless now, but a time will come when you will look upon life as a mere empty dream.—Did I tell you that we are going to live at St. Petersburg for the next two years? We leave in September.’

‘No, really! then my life is indeed a dream, and your departure the awakening,’ said I, looking at her sentimentally.

‘Foolish boy!’ said she coquettishly; ‘it is not for *me* that you care;’ and she laid a

stress on the word 'me,' which plainly implied that she knew of my secret passion for Lady Trevennis. I slightly coloured, but soon recovered myself.

'What a charming picture is the tilting-ground, with its air of mediæval romance!' said I, pointing to the lists bathed in the sunshine.

'Yes,' answered my companion; 'it is the most fairy-like thing I have ever seen.'

'Had I not seen Lady Charles, I too might make the same remark,' said I, bowing, and rising to usher some new arrivals into their ticketed seats.

'Shall we see you next Thursday? I have a meeting for the clothing of the Kamschatka infants; the Bishop of Alluere will be there.'

'I shall be delighted to come,' said I. 'I suppose there are no infants nearer than Kamschatka, though, that want clothing,'

added I, laughing. 'But perhaps distance lends enchantment to the view. I own it is far more romantic to sympathise with distress existing at the east end of Siberia than at the east end of London. But I must attend to my duties;' and I bowed my adieu, as I went to wait upon the new arrivals.

Everybody knows that Piræus House, Belgrave-square, the residence of Lord Charles Marathon (younger brother of the Marquess of Arbela), is one of the chief strongholds of London evangelicalism. The distinctions which the so-called religious world draws between itself and the profane world in the matter of tastes and amusements used often to amuse me, and make me moralise on the subtlety of the human mind. To an ordinary observer the difference between these two worlds seems but slight; indeed, the only difference I could

distinguish was that the one world freely enjoyed its pleasures, while the other world was always hankering after them, and trying how nearly it could approach without actually crossing the border which is supposed to divide the two communities.

Lady Charles, whose husband was 'very religious,' never went to a ball, unless it was a State one, or to operas or theatres; but by assiduously patronising all concerts, botanical fêtes, charade parties, drawing-room entertainments, reading very mundane novels that appeared in so-called religious magazines, flirting at her bazaar stalls, and dining out or giving dinners six nights in the week, she managed to enjoy the pleasures of the world in no contemptible degree. In fact, she tried to make the best of both worlds. Once a week she gave a conversatione, as a kind of salve to her conscience and to please her husband, when some re-

religious topic or the other was discussed. It was not a very lively entertainment. Chairs were ranged round the room in rows, on which we all sat in silent agony; while three or four gentlemen—one of them generally a peer or a bishop—seated round a table, would tell us of their missionary labours, or advocate some particular society, or else inform us how bad they once were, and how good they were now. And then the missionary or the converted Jew, Mohammedan, or Brahmin, or the Revivalist, would go round the room with a white china plate to collect sovereigns and half sovereigns for ‘the cause.’ The ‘talkee, talkee’ over, we went down to a capital supper (as a rule, the evangelical world cares more for the body than for raiment; they generally are as ill-dressed as their dishes are well-dressed), and be as mundane as if we were at a ball-supper.

What I remember of evangelical society

appeared to me to be an ingenious compromise between conscience and the world. Its chief object was, how nearly to be of the world and yet not in it, and how dextrously to touch pitch without being defiled. Lady Charles was a charming, agreeable woman; yet she thought it incumbent on herself to set up for a saint, and talk cant about the things of the other world, when she was secretly very much attached to the vanities of the one she at present inhabited. Her assemblies were a regular *omnium gatherum*; many a man who was no gentleman had struggled into society by pretending to be a shining light, and thus, *ex-officio* as it were, had obtained the *entrée* of Piræus House. But certain people like to support those who carry religion flauntingly into their business: they like to buy their wine from a serious merchant, believing it to be as sound as his

principles; or to bank with a pious banker, thinking him as safe in this world as in the next. Occasionally they find out that they have been deceived. But this is a digression.

At one o'clock a series of cannon reports from Eden Lodge announced that the procession had started. The spectators in the grand stand rose up simultaneously, and directed their glasses towards the Lodge, whose grounds joined Moor Park at its north-eastern extremity. The procession was to leave the Lodge, skirt round the park, and then enter the lists just underneath the galleries. At first all we could distinguish was a long white line threading its serpentine way through the broad newly gravelled paths of the grounds of the Lodge; but as it came nearer and nearer to us after entering the park, we had a splendid view along its whole line. Cries of 'How very

pretty!' 'What a most charming effect!' 'Quite carries us back to olden times!' 'As good as the Eglinton!' &c. broke from the spectators, followed by cheer after cheer as the procession approached closer to them. It was indeed a gay and imposing sight; and not the least effective portion of it, in my eyes, were the hundreds of quaintly dressed men and women around me: the women in splendid velvet dresses of variegated colours with wide hanging sleeves, and in head-dresses ornamented with precious stones; the men in various knightly costumes with long velvet cassocks or doublets and variegated silk hose, or in esquires' dresses of white cashmere trimmed with gold.

And now the procession entered the tilting-ground, and every eye could easily discern the costumes of the wearers and the splendid armour of the knights. I swag-

gered conceitedly past the crowded and enthusiastic rank of the spectators—(what a circean influence society exercises!—if it smiles on a man, it generally makes him a puppy; and if it frowns on him, it makes him a cur)—to open the barriers that led to the throne of the Queen of Beauty; then gracefully leaning on my wand of office, with my back to the visitors, I awaited the arrival of my queen, and watched the long line of her escort.

Sir Burr had arranged everything extremely well, and for the first time of my life I realised what a tournament was really like.

This was the procession :

In front, marching with measured steps, were the men-at-arms four abreast, sheathed in steel, and carrying their lances; behind them were the trumpeters in the rich costumes of the days of chivalry. Then came the Deputy Marshal of the Lists, surrounded

by the heralds and pursuivants, habited in the costly tabards peculiar to their office, and 'each his scutcheon bore.' In their rear followed the band on horseback, escorted by halberdiers armed with their halberds, and wearing scarlet tunics embroidered with the arms of the Trevennises.

After the halberdiers came a group of men-at-arms in morions and breast and back plates of polished steel, with their drawn swords in their hands, and wearing buff boots made of strong leather of the seventeenth century, instead of the steel greaves of an earlier age.

Then followed Sir Burr Lesque, the Knight Marshal, on horseback, his fat round little figure encased in a *cap-à-pie* suit of black armour of the date of Henry VIII., and the housings of his horse emblazoned with heraldic devices.

He was accompanied by his esquires,

and by several fair ladies dressed in velvet trimmed with ermine, and on their heads the tasteful head-gear of the end of the sixteenth century.

And now appeared Sir John Trevennis, the King of the Tournament, escorted by halberdiers on foot. He was clad in a splendid suit of polished steel *cap-à-pie* armour, and a skirt of chain mail. Right well he bore himself on his prancing steed, which was clothed in horse armour and caparisons of chanfron and manefure, with steel-plated saddle and emblazoned housings.

Sir John's appearance was greeted with loud cheers and hurrahs, which rose to a perfectly deafening clamour as the observed of all observers, the Queen of Beauty, passed along the lists. She was mounted on a spirited palfrey, and attended by a group of most charming women, who escorted her to the throne—formed of elaborate carved

work overlaid with gold and hung with drapery of sky-blue damask—from which she was to issue her commands, and with

‘bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize’

to the adventurous knights.

As Lady Trevennis alighted from her saddle, I opened the doors of the staircase, and crying out, ‘Room for the Queen!’ preceded her ladyship backwards to the throne, bowing at every three paces most gravely.

As she ascended the steps of the regal seat, whilst her maids of honour stood around her, and bowed her thanks to the vociferating assembly, she looked indeed worthy to be a queen. Her splendid beauty, her air of pride and hauteur, and the lofty dignity of her carriage, well became her position. The dress she wore was magnificent. It was a long robe of violet velvet emblazoned in gold on corn-flour blue velvet,


with a cap of blue velvet barred with gold, over which was worn a coronet of stones set in gold.

Her majesty being seated on her throne, beckoned me to her side, and spoke a few words about the ceremony. As I quitted her to make way for the various gallants who were anxious to pay their devoirs, she whispered, 'Your dress is admirable; it becomes you very well;' and her eyes met mine for a moment; their kind and approving expression haunted me during the day.

No sooner had the Queen taken her seat than the remainder of the procession passed round the lists. First came several ladies on horseback, surrounded by halberdiers and billmen armed with partisans; and then the Duke of Rohan in a splendid suit of armour of the finest steel plates, preceded by his gonfalon borne by a man-at-arms on horseback, and attended by his esquires bearing

his emblazoned banner and tilting helmet. He was greeted with loud cheers, and certainly, even in its palmiest days, no tournament ever saw a more magnificent knight. The ease with which he bore himself in his armour, and the graceful manner in which he managed his spirited horse, drew down applause from all.

I noticed that his Grace was the only knight who ventured to *bow* to the Queen as he passed the throne; the others passed bolt upright, not daring to bend in act of graceful homage for fear of tumbling off their horses on account of their weighty armour. Following the duke, in suits of polished armour, and attended by their different grooms, pages, esquires, retainers, and men-at-arms, were the Knights of the Griffin, the Dragon, the Swan, the Stag's Head, &c., preceded by their gonfalons floating proudly in the breeze. The proces-



sion ended with the Knights Visitors in ancient costume, followed by a troop of men-at-arms, swordsmen, and bowmen.


The procession over, the several knights and men-at-arms proceeded to their tents, and prepared for the tilting. Nothing could be more real and animated than the scene which the lists now presented. Lady Charles was quite right in saying that it was most fairy-like.

The tilting-ground was a fine plain of verdant turf, perfectly flat, and admirably adapted to the purposes for which it was intended. At either end were the pavilions of the different knights, bearing their masters' various colours; emblazoned shields hung at their sides, and banners and pennons rustled bravely in the wind from their tented summits. Around the pavilions were bands of retainers, servitors, grooms, and attendants, examining the lances of the

knights, arranging pieces of armour, or attending to the war-horses, who filled the air with their defiant neighing. Here and there some gallant knight was quaffing before his tent a richly chased goblet of claret or burgundy.

Along the tilting-ground, running parallel to the grand balcony, was the barrier; it was about three hundred yards long and nearly six feet in height, and built of strong planks supported by palisades. On either side of it the turf was thickly strewn with sawdust to prevent the horses from slipping.

For the first half hour, as nothing was going to happen beyond the exercising of the men-at-arms, marshalling the halberdiers and bowmen, and the galloping of esquires and retainers about the ground, I determined to walk round all the galleries and see my friends. I had not far to go before I espied them all chatting and laughing



away, as happy and as excited as a child over a new plaything.


Behind Lady Trevennis, who was conversing with a very distinguished personage, was Mrs. M'Mushroom, who was Chief Mistress of the Ceremonies, dressed *à merveille*. She had on a rich white satin brocade in gold and coloured flowers, trimmed with old point-lace. Over this was a saya of emerald velvet, with her armorial bearings in front. (M'Mushroom's armorial bearings! Phœbus, what a joke!) On her head she wore a head-dress of sky-blue velvet, with a quarille of precious stones, whilst a rich Brussels veil fell gracefully over her shoulders. Mrs. Mac was in ecstasies; and if only Mrs. M'Truckle could have seen her, she (*not* Mrs. M'Truckle) would have been in the seventh heaven of bliss.

There was Faynix, because he was an Irishman, dressed in Highland costume, with

a claymore down his side, talking to the Duke of Sutton (better known as the Marquess of Epsom), who had just given up the turf, and looked as if he would soon be laid under it, for he was as blind as love, and as shaky as Spanish securities.

There was the Duke of Whistine in a splendid cassock covered with pearls, in conversation deep with Mr. Iscariot Hackney, the great critic, and author of more unpublished works than any man living. If he did not, however, succeed as an author, he was most successful as a critic—bad wine makes good vinegar. He was dressed in archer's costume; and very properly so, for he drew the long-bow to perfection.

There was Lord Platey Tude, the very serious peer and Plymouth brother, who wrote 'The Shoe-latchet—the Biography of a Converted Cobbler,' and preached all over the country, and who, as one of the Middlesex



magistrates, annually granted the licenses to the Argyll Rooms and the Holborn Casino. He was simply dressed in Windsor uniform, and was boring poor Lady Charles frightfully with his conversation.

There was a group of elderly bucks dressed in white cashmeres trimmed with gold, congratulating Lady Sophia Serpentine on the success of her wonderful cookery-book—a work of great taste.

There was Count Snezyouski, the Polish patriot—the wrongs of whose unhappy country had set him to rights at once with London society, and proved a by no means bad thing for the illustrious exile—talking to Mr. Dionysius Cheeke, the great author, whose works were so full of deep pathos, exquisite tenderness, sublime morals, and fierce denunciations against vice, and who jilted his wife for an Italian actress.

There was Lady Sophia Kingairloch, the

wife of one of the handsomest men in England, a madly jealous woman, who never took her eyes off her husband, and who saw in his every 'how do you do' an assignation, and in his every 'no thank you' criminality. She was dressed in a rich satin brocade *à la* Pompadour, and was looking very beautiful. I made my best bow as I passed her.

There was Lady Ann, surrounded by her nephews and nieces; and by her side the Dowager Marchioness of Dawlish, and, dressed as a page *à la* Louis XIV., little Reggie, fighting with his cousins.

Indeed, who was there not? There were duchesses as old as their creations and as lined as a railway map, talking to mushroom countesses as falsely got up as their pedigrees. There were baronets in shoals, whose only fear was, that they might be taken for knights or aldermen. There were county gentry, looking as stiff as their

fences, and as exclusive as their parks. There were cotton lords in profusion, whose wives apparently, from their toilettes, did not patronise their cotton lords and masters' manufactures. There were great men from Manchester and Liverpool, with their wives and daughters, looking as raw as the produce they dealt in.


There were professional men, who looked as if they never did such a low thing as to earn money, and whose wives talked Burke and Debrett among themselves. Then there were ambassadors and legislators, wits and humourists, soldiers and sailors, city magnates and social paupers, literary men and men of letters, dandies and students, bachelors and Benedicks, low-church clergymen in spectacles with hair as long as their sermons, ritualistic parsons in long coats and collars as high as their doctrine,—in short, everybody who had any claim to be any-

body: aristocracy, bureaucracy, democracy, hierocracy, plutocracy, hypocrisy, they were all well represented, and especially the last.

After having seen the various spectators, and chatted with those I knew, I turned my attention to the gallery in which was the Queen of Beauty.

The very distinguished personage had now quitted Lady Trevennis, and was talking to the Marchioness of St. James, who sat a few chairs off her rival, and whose pale statue-like face required only to be lit up with animation to make its beauty absolutely perfect. A crowd of gallant knights and esquires were surrounding Lady Trevennis, and making running comments upon everything and everybody. But there was one tall fair man, dressed in a knight's costume of the fifteenth century of dark blue velvet embroidered with fleurs de lis, and in ankle-boots of blue and yellow kid

braided with gold, on whom Lady Trevennis smiled frequently, and whom I recognised at once as the Earl of Edgeware. I cursed him in my heart, and watched his every movement most jealously ; for I plainly saw that the Queen of Beauty showed him a preference which she denied to others. The severity of my regard, however, soon broke into smiles, as it met the liquid splendid eyes of Violet de Bohun, a young lady with whom I had lately indulged in the graceful amusement of flirtation. It had been my lot the last fortnight to be thrown rather more in her society than usual, from the fact of her being one of the maids of honour to Lady Trevennis. She was a beautiful fair-haired girl, with a sweet sunny smile, and eyes as soft as dew upon a violet and fringed with long black lashes. Those eyes now most plainly said, 'How you are neglecting me!' and so, treading on the corns of a



bishop, elbowing a vice - chancellor, jostling a grand duke who had come to England on a matrimonial spec, and disturbing more or less everybody who was in my immediate vicinity, I succeeded in approaching Miss de Bohun and paying my devoirs. She wore, in common with the other maids of honour, a dress of white satin with silver and crêpe lisse trimmings, the berthe and ruffles of point-lace, and on her head a gold fillet studded with pearls.

‘How very handsome!’ said she, looking critically at my Venetian dress, as I sat on a red velvet stool by her side.

‘Am I a mirror, that you see your own reflection?’ said I.

‘How silly you are! But I congratulate you on your costume—Venetian, is it not? It is charming and,’ putting her head on one side and surveying me coquettishly, ‘very becoming.’

‘You raise me to Paradise, Miss de Bohun, when you tell me that you—you—approve of my suit!’ said I softly.

‘And you care for my approval?’ said she, laughing pleasantly.

‘It is the only thing I live for,’ replied I; for I made a point of flirting with every pretty woman I came across, except Lady Trevennis, and with her I felt too deeply my love to make a joke about it.

‘And how often this morning have you said the same thing to others?’ asked she, smiling.

‘You make the sixth,’ replied I simply. ‘But I quite forgot to say, that I have strict orders from the Knight Marshal not to allow any one to speak modern English in this gallery.’

‘What language are we to talk, then?’ asked she curiously.

‘The only language that your charming



sex ever learns without being taught, *le langage des yeux !*

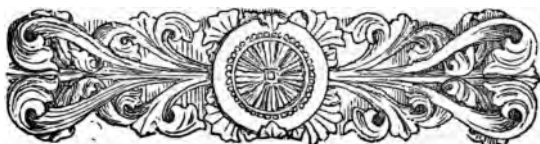
Some pearls on her robe were hanging in a rather disorderly fashion, and she took off her gauntlet to arrange them.

‘Pray take my glove, Mr. Disney, for a moment,’ said she, giving me a glance which comprehended the whole grammar of the language I had just mentioned.

‘Only the glove?’ said I piteously ; ‘am I, then, to be content with the mere husk? Ah, why not the hand also? at least let me claim it for the first waltz to-night?’

‘*Con piacere,*’ she replied, smiling.

And I found myself in such agreeable quarters, that I determined to remain where I was during the mimic contests in the lists, which were now about to commence.



CHAPTER VI.

THE TOURNAMENT.

'Heard ye the din of battle bray,
Lance to lance and horse to horse ?


Drums and trumpets echo loudly,
Wave the crimson banners proudly:
From balcony the queen looked on.

And pomp and feast and revelry,
With masque and antique pageantry.'

AND now the bustle and confusion that had characterised the lists had subsided into studied order and arrangement. Instead of esquires scouring the well-rolled plain, men-at-arms and halberdiers marching indiscriminately about, and grooms and retainers wandering

everywhere in quest of their masters, the field presented an appearance of the most perfect regularity. In the front of their pavilions were the different knights about to engage in combat, with their esquires and retainers drawn up in military order behind them; the men-at-arms and halberdiers were standing at ease in picturesque groups, their lances and halberds piled up before them; along the extremities of the lists were the billmen and bowmen keeping guard; and leisurely walking his horse up and down the arena was the Sancho-Panza-like figure of Sir Burr.

Suddenly there rang through the silent air the shrill notes of a bugle, and an esquire from the pavilion of Kingairloch of Kingairloch rode up to the Duke of Rohan, holding a glove. His Grace held up his hand in sign of acceptance of the challenge. And now the band beneath us struck up the 'Tournament




March,' and as the Duke and Kingairloch rode past the gallery to the Queen of Beauty, with heads unhelmed, to pay her their devoirs before the engagement, loud and long were the shouts that welcomed their appearance. Then, attended by their esquires, both the combatants proceeded to the barrier, and after saluting Sir Burr, were conducted to their respective stations, one at each end and on opposite sides of the barrier.

The two men presented a splendid picture. Both were much on a par as regards height and make; for Kingairloch was as magnificent a type of the genus *homo* as artist or muscular christian ever conceived, and quite a match in weight and stature for his Grace, though less at his ease on horseback.

Search the Scottish Highlands through from coast to coast, and you could find no more stalwart man than the haughty chief

of his clan, Kingairloch of Kingairloch. See him in the home of his ancestors, and I defy you to know a more hospitable host, a more courteous man or truer friend. ‘Fast and true’ has been the motto of his house for centuries, and few of his race have ever, in spite of wars and persecutions, proved false to its words. No wonder his wife was jealous of his god-like beauty; for there were few women, I ween, who would have resisted the dark-visaged broad-limbed Highlander. But the beautiful woman of his choice needlessly troubled her sensitive mind; for Kingairloch was unfashionable enough to regard the motto of his house as applying rather more to his marriage-vow than to anything else in his conduct.

Some regarded Kingairloch as haughty, cold, and passionless. Haughty he was, as men of his ancient lineage are apt to be in these levelling days; but that he was cold



and passionless, those who had seen him on that memorable day which had made his name famous or notorious, which you will, knew was false.

At the time of the Sepoy mutiny, a sister of his, the wife of an Indian judge, had been foully outraged and murdered at Cawnpore. Fiercely her brother swore, when he heard the terrible news, that her cruel shame should be as fully avenged as finite man ever worked out revenge. Already Kingairloch's deeds in the Bengal provinces had made his name a fearful household word in many a Sepoy home, and had given to the regiment he commanded the sobriquet of the Kilted Devils. An opportunity soon occurred for him to effect his purpose.

He was marching to the relief of Lucknow, when he fell in with a regiment of Sepoys 2,000 strong. His men were barely

500 ; but they gave battle as only Britons can give battle, when their natural apathy is roused to fever-heat by passion and revenge. Before the fierce *élan* and thirsting hate of his kilted men, the accursed mutineers were mowed down like ripened corn, and fled in terror. But they fled in vain ; for behind them, like blood-hounds on the track, was their infuriated enemy.

Panic-stricken, the Sepoys ran like demons over the arid plains, till they had entered a deep valley at the foot of a mountain gorge, with scorching redstone rocks on either side ; but, as fate would have it, with no exit at its farther end. They were caught in a trap, and, utterly cowed, howled for mercy. But loud as a clarion rang the voice of Kingairloch :

‘ Charge, and spare not ! Avenge Cawn-pore, my men ; and let not a mother’s son escape to tell of your vengeance ! ’

Like maddened tigers, his soldiers echoed back with cheers his commands, and charged at the double their hellish foes. To the letter were the commands of their colonel obeyed. The Sepoys, finding that they had to deal with men as pitiless and bloodthirsty as themselves, essayed for a time to make a fight of it. But their craven hearts soon gave in before the terrible slaughter around them. Shot showered like hail on their bending ranks; and when ammunition failed, recourse was had to the dirk and bayonet.


And foremost in every charge, knee-deep in blood, was the Titan-like form of Kingairloch, sabering to the right and to the left; so that his progress was visible by the incessant series of circles of annihilation. The sun had sunk from its zenith to its bed in the blood-red west before the fearful massacre was ended. And when it *had* ended, not a Sepoy lived to tell the tale of

Kingairloch's revenge ; but there on the morrow, in that fell valley, wives sought their husbands, mothers their sons, and found them lying like charred timber in a river of blood, cold and dead. It was one of the bloodiest deeds in the annals of military history ; but if there be men who blame the stalwart Highlander for his terrible act of retribution, write not my name among the number.

Such was the man who, firm and erect as a column of steel, faced his Grace of Rohan to open the ball of the Tournament.

‘Mr. Disney,’ asked my fair companion, ‘tell me, please, what they are going to do. I know nothing whatever about tilting.’

‘From your cruel conduct to me, I fear you know more about jilting,’ said I, laughing. ‘In one respect, however, the two things are similar, for the result of both is generally to knock a man over for a time.



But permit me to enlighten you about yonder knights. You see that they are at opposite ends of the barrier, and one on each side of it. Well, at the signal given, they will urge on their wild untamed steeds at full gallop, and meeting in the middle of the barrier, charge each other with their lances till one is unhorsed or otherwise defeated, and then the victor rides up to Lady Trevennis, and is crowned. Ah ! they're off !

The heralds sounded the charge ; and at the cry of '*Laissez les aller !*' the Duke and Kingairloch started simultaneously at full gallop. Every eye was bent upon them, and the intense silence of the spectators testified how deeply they were interested in the combat. Betting was, however, six to four on the Duke. During the first course both knights missed each other ; but the second time they met in mid-career, and the ring of their lances on their armour made

the welkin sound with the clash. The Duke received his opponent's shock without swerving; but not so Kingairloch. Sharply and steadily Rohan planted his lance full on the Highlander's broad powerful breast-plate, and the latter swayed terribly in his saddle for a few seconds; but recovering his balance, spurred on his horse full tilt to renew the charge. Again they met, and crash went their lances, breaking into splinters like withered sticks from the violence of the shock. Fresh lances were brought to the combatants by their esquires, and the horses of each were led back again to the extreme end of the barrier.

Loud were the plaudits of the spectators at the gallant bearing of the knights, who had fully entered into the spirit of the fight, and were as eager for the fray as ever. Again the herald sounded the charge, and the Duke and Kingairloch met once more in

mid career. There was no missing this time. With a fearful echo their lances resounded on the breast-plates of the combatants, and the Duke, swaying like a bell that had just been rung, had the satisfaction of seeing his opponent roll from his horse and fall heavily to the ground. The triumph of his Grace was greeted with loud cheers by his esquires and the spectators, which increased all the more as he rode up to the gallery of the Queen, attended by Sir Burr, to receive the wreath of victory.

During the interval that now ensued I conducted my fair companion to the buffet that stood behind the gallery, before which beef-eaters and *dames de comptoir*, dressed in the costume of serving-women of the time of Edward III., dispensed luxuries and delicacies both modern and ancient.

Having done ample justice to some boar's head and a flagon of Malmsey, while

Miss de Bohun contented herself with the modern champagne cup and a Neapolitan ice, we returned to our seats.

I caught Lady Trevennis' eye as she beckoned me to approach her.

'You seem very much *épris* with Miss de Bohun?' she said archly.

'When the rays of the moon are intercepted, one is thankful for the light of even a glittering star,' replied I; for Lady Trevennis had been so surrounded by gallants of high degree, that it was impossible for so humble a man as I to approach her.

'And have you the bad taste to disparage my complexion by likening me to what Milton calls the "spotty globe"? Well, I forgive you; and as you have performed your duties to my royal satisfaction, if you keep—' and she looked at some ivory tablets studded with opals and turquoises — 'yes, if you keep valse No. 5 open, I may condescend to

illumine your existence this evening as your partner. And now, if you can spare a few moments from the attractive society of Miss de Bohun, sit down beside me, and tell me how you think the *fête* is going off.'

I obeyed her; and for the next five minutes, intoxicated by her brilliant beauty, I was oblivious of aught but her, and felt my soul in Paradise. Soon, however, I was reminded that I was but mundane, by her telling me to bid Charlie Oyer to come and speak to her. He was a young officer in the Coldstreams, eldest son of Lord Terminer, and as fine a looking fellow as ever wore a bearskin or kept guard at Buckingham Palace, but, alas, suffering then from all the pecuniary ills that extravagance is heir to. 'If I'm lucky, I shall last till Christmas,' said he to me one night as I dined with him at St. James's Palace, previous to his going on duty. I approached

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him and tapped him on the shoulder, saying, 'In the Queen's name.' He gave a start, which might have been nervousness, but which I feared was more likely insolvency. 'All right, Charlie; I'm not a bailiff, only a steward, and Lady Trevennis wants to see you,' said I. He laughed pleasantly; and after a few words about the tilting, went off to see Lady Trevennis.

I threaded my way back again through the crowd to the select gallery, to resume my seat by the side of the lovely Miss de Bohun; but the portly frame of Mr. Elephant, the wealthy member for Heavitree, blocked my path, whilst talking to another brother Radical.

'Depend upon it,' said he, 'the law 'll have to interfere with Trades Unions; they must be put down—we live in times of progress.'

'I beg to differ from you, Mr. Elephant,'

said I, 'till you kindly permit me to pass you.'

'Ah, Disney, how are you? glad to see you so handsome. You are one of the right sort, I know. Ye're an advocate for progress, ain't ye?' said he.

'Certainly not,' replied I, passing on. 'Progress nowadays only means the general abolition of everything.'

'And Toryism, canonised stagnation,' echoed back Mr. Elephant, who found that my political views rather sympathised with that party.

At last I succeeded in getting into the gallery and by the side of Miss de Bohun.


Various tilting matches had occurred since the contest between the Duke and Kingairloch, and in one a Scotch laird, the Loon o' Cockpen, was slightly wounded in the wrist. But now *the* event of the day—the international *mêlée*—was about to take

place. Four knights — the Duke of Rohan, Kingairloch, Viscount Bantry, and Sir Llewellyn Gwychebety, the representatives of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales — were opposed to the Vicomte de Centamours, Baron Kalbsfleisch, Prince Korke-morff, and the Cavaliere di San Argento. The combatants were stationed at the extremities of the ground, four at one end, and four at the other. Sir Burr, with his assistant marshals and a strong escort of men-at-arms on horseback, took up his position beside the throne of Lady Trevennis, to exercise his authority if need be, and to enforce the regulations of the combat. At his cry of ‘Laissez les aller,’ all the eight knights spurred their horses to the charge, and met in the middle of the field in right good will. A regular *mêlée* now ensued, and blow after blow fell upon breast-plate and helmet in such rapid succession, that for some minutes

it was impossible to distinguish the different combatants. So earnestly did they belabour each other, that it appeared to the spectators as if, instead of a mimic contest, it was a real international fight. The first to be unhorsed was the cavalier who was opposed to Kingairloch, and his example was soon followed by Viscount Bantry, whom a splendid stroke of Centamours' had sent reeling off his horse. The Duke now engaged the Frenchman, and a desperate struggle ensued, into which the excited spectators fully entered. Both their lances had been shivered to atoms, and the two knights were now, in spite of the cries of Sir Burr, busily occupied in struggling with each other in something which looked uncommonly like a wrestling match on horseback. At last the powerful arms of the Duke seized the Vicomte just under his breast-plate, and threw him heavily on to the ground. Kingairloch had been engaged

with the German baron, who, with the indomitable perseverance of his nation, was making a splendid fight of it, till, in an impetuous charge of the Highlander's, he had the misfortune to encounter his adversary's lance full tilt against his breast. He staggered like a drunken man, and then, losing his balance, fell off his steel-plated saddle on to the field, and Kingairloch, attended by his esquires, rode up to the Queen to receive his reward amid the acclamations of the guests.

Various other encounters took place, the one that excited the most interest being the tilting-match between the Marquess of Lebanon and his old political opponent, Mr. Joyrock, in which both the knights met fighting as much *con amore* and *con furore* as if they were once more battling with each other in the House of Commons. After a couple of charges, in which Mr. Joyrock's horse-



armour was severely damaged, the Marquess had the satisfaction of seeing his opponent stagger under the shock of his lance, and bite the dust, or rather sawdust.

I was a great admirer of the Marquess, of his splendid genius, humorous wit, and kindly geniality, whilst his political antagonist was as heavy as his armour, and as dry as the sawdust on which he had fallen; and so, as my lord of Lebanon gallantly bent his dark impassive face before Lady Trevennis, and bowed his thanks for the guerdon he received at her hands, I added my voice most heartily to the general cheering.

A move was now made to the grounds of Eden Lodge for croquet, aunt Sally, bowls, skittles, and all the other outdoor amusements, that were liberally provided. It was certainly a gay and brilliant sight to look upon the tall well-made men and the fair women, dressed in all descriptions of medi-

eval costume, playing either modern games, or at that game which bids fair to outlast every other sort of amusement—flirting.

As I gazed at the tastefully laid-out grounds, the gay marquees, the distant lists, the picturesque attitudes of the guests and their variegated dresses, I thought how such a scene would have pleased Watteau. It is not the pen but the brush that alone is worthy of doing justice to so gorgeous a fête. At least, I shall not attempt description.

It was my especial duty to attend to the maids of honour in waiting on Lady Trevennis, and as they looked as if they were made ‘to engage all hearts and charm all eyes,’ I felt that I was most peculiarly privileged.


We played croquet; we succeeded in hitting from aunt Sally’s fair lips her reprehensible pipe; we drank the sparkling vintages of Champagne and Burgundy from marble fountains, beneath the whitest of

tents, and served to us by the fairest of maidens in Swiss costumes; we pattered on the Dutch tiles of the miniature dairy, and ate ices handed to us by Tyrolese peasants; we had our fortunes told by the oldest of gipsies, in the most romantic of grottoes and the coolest of dells; we flirted in boats on the shining river or in honeysuckled arbours, or whilst making hay by the scent-breathing haycocks.

We wandered back again to the lists, and saw the most deadly struggles between young and ardent knights, chiefly of the Household Brigade, who scorned Sir Burr and all the rules of chivalry, and lost their temper and their lances, and fought in downright earnest. And then a bugle sounded on the lawn, and we turned back to the lodge, and the ladies retired to their rooms to dress for dinner; and all was still and quiet for a while.

At eight we met in a magnificent marquee, adorned with tapestry and floored with cedar, which led out from the drawing-rooms of the lodge. It was lit-up most brilliantly from the ceiling, and decorated with hosts of exotic plants, rare shrubs, and blooming flowers. From the canvased walls hung banners, standards, and gonfalons, whilst from the tall shrubs that lined their base there played, at intervals, exquisitely scented fountains, whose murmuring music was no ineffective addition to strains divinely discoursed by the bands of the Grenadiers and Artillery at the end of the tent.


Two tables were laid down the whole length of the marquee for different guests, who were marshalled to their places by stewards dressed in scarlet velvet, white silk hose, and scarlet ankle-boots braided with gold. Running at right angles to these tables was a raised dais, on which was a



long splendidly-appointed table. At this table sat Lady Trevennis and the more distinguished guests, including several of the knights who had been engaged in the morning's tournament. At the other tables were the remaining visitors.

I had the honour of sitting among the maids of honour, between Miss de Bohun and a very pretty Miss Anstruther. Dishes both modern and ancient, from the boar's head and the baron of beef to the later delicacies introduced by Ude, Brillat-Savarin, Francatelli, and Soyer, succeeded each other with a frequency and rapidity that the Mansion House, on a ministers' banquet night, might have envied.

To describe to you the magnificent silver and gold plate upon which we were served, and which adorned the banquet-table; the rare exotics that now breathed from gaily painted Dresden vases, and anon



surrounded massive silver coolers, from whose depths rose crystal blocks of ice gracefully entwined with the freshest and most verdant of fern-leaves; the gorgeously embossed gold cups and antique candelabra that relieved at intervals the rare and luscious fruits piled on the fairest of china dishes; the wines dry, curious, and sparkling that we freely imbibed; in short, the whole concomitants of the royal banquet,—suit neither my ability nor inclination. I have never seen anything like it, nor will London, I take it, ever look upon the like again. Everybody was in costume, and the scene recalled the glitter of a stage festival, *minus* its tinsel, and *plus* the taste of the appointments, and the reality of all the surroundings.

As the delicious vintages loosened our tongues, the conversation became as bright and sparkling as the sillery to which the

young damozels near me did so much justice, that it augured well for the ball that was to follow. Happy anecdotes, neat epigrams, and incisive wit gaily went round, and all was as sparkling and festive as man could wish and woman listen to.

And then there was a pause, and the Duke of Rohan proposed the health of the Queen of the fête, which was replied to very gracefully by Sir John. After this followed the health of the Duke of Rohan, who made a capital but slightly too long speech about tournament revivals; then the Marquess of Lebanon in his airiest and most felicitous style proposed the Maids of Honour. It was my duty to return thanks; but I am afraid I made a sad hash of my eloquence, though I had practised for a whole week before my little prepared speech; but when the time came for its delivery, I utterly lost

myself, and hence murdered my flowing periods, said what I did not mean, and in short made as great a fool of myself as do most men during their after dinner discourses. Glib enough usually, I found that before such an audience I soon began to hesitate—and a speech is like temptation: if you hesitate, you're lost. However, there were plenty of other failures to keep me company. After this, numerous other toasts were drunk—and perhaps one or two of the guests.

About ten o'clock the ladies withdrew to the ball-room, and the men, now left alone, passed the decanters freely, and looked as if they were resolved to imitate by their frequent and heavy potations the customs of the age their costumes represented. As for me, I soon left the banqueting tent and entered the ball-room, which was in a splendid marquee at the other side of


Eden Lodge, and approached through the hall and library.

Nothing could be more imposing than the appearance of this marquee. It was equal in length to the tent in which we had dined, and most charmingly decorated with banners, numerous crystal candelabra, prismatic fountains, ferns, flowers, &c., and on either side were the most delicious little alcoves draped in pale blue satin that ever suggested causeries and flirtation. At the north end of the ball-room was a canopy, the draperies of which were frieze with gold. It was surmounted with plumed coronets, and lined with cloth of gold splendidly emblazoned with armorial bearings. Beneath the canopy were placed chairs of state, and lower on the double dais were fauteuils. These seats were for the *crème de la crème*. The orchestra was placed at the side.

At eleven o'clock the procession entered the room, Lady Trevennis leaning upon the Duke of Rohan, whilst Sir John conducted his Duchess.

Lady Trevennis was dressed to perfection in a petticoat of rich cerise velvet ornamented with pearls, and a jacket of silver cloth trimmed with sable, fastened at the waist with diamonds and emeralds. Her hair was arranged in small curls, several of the curls upon her chignon being festooned with diamonds, brooches, and stars, whilst a splendid tiara of diamonds encircled her Grecian brow.

The Duke wore a cassock of emerald velvet braided with gold, and on his head a diadem with a large cluster of diamonds in the centre. The Duchess of Rohan was in green satin trimmed with Brussels lace, and looked most beautiful as, leaning on the arm of Sir John,



she threaded her way through the crowd to her seat on the dais.

The privileged seats were soon occupied, and nothing could be more effective than the scene they presented. Behind Lady Trevennis were her maids of honour in ball dresses of pink satin trimmed with point lace, and my distinguished self in a white satin doublet slashed with black velvet, pale blue hose, and black velvet ankle-boots braided with gold.

On either side of us were Kingairloch, his splendid figure set off to full advantage in a Highland dress consisting of a jacket of green velvet mounted with silver buttons, and tartan and philibeg of the plaid of his clan; Lord Edgeware, in a costume of purple velvet slashed with white satin, and white silk hose; Mrs. M'Mushroom in a robe of velvet trimmed with ermine and jewels; Lady St. James in pale

blue satin brocaded *à la* Pompadour, and on her head a headdress of ponceau velvet trimmed with old point, and confined round the temples with a circlet of diamonds; and a host of other fair guests.

But to describe those who either furnished the daïs with their brilliant toilettes, or the ball-room with their brilliant appearance, would require the flowing pen of a Jenkins or a Court newsman. Suffice it to say, that the ladies were chiefly attired in velvet or silk dresses, with different descriptions of head-dresses, and the gentlemen in various velvet cassocks or doublets, which showed to great advantage in the well-lighted room.

After the first waltz, a very pretty cotillon, in which I had the good fortune of being included, was got up, led by the Duke of Rohan and the Marchioness of St. James's.

Many of the well-known figures were danced, but the most amusing ones were those in which the men had to put on masks, and to leap through hoops, before selecting a partner. Various presents and bouquets were given away; and the whole thing was a decided success.

But the dance of dances for which I was ardently longing was valse No. 5. It was very seldom that Lady Trevennis condescended to dance with me, and only when she was in rare good humour with her humble servant. At last the happy moment arrived, and I claimed the fulfilment of her promise. She took my arm, and soon we were floating round the room to the charming strains of Weber's 'Invitation.' As I encircled her lovely waist, and felt her warm breath fanning my cheeks, and her scented hair close to my lips, how I wished that the valse

might be eternal ! I would have liked her never to be withdrawn from that embrace, her upturned face never to have ceased gazing into mine, that delicately-gloved hand never to be free from my pressure, that royal figure always to assume that attitude of affectionate intimacy with me. What a chasm of frigid conventionalities one overleaps at a moment in the giddy valse or exciting galop ! You see a beautiful woman for the first time ; you are introduced to her ; and the next minute your arm is around her waist, her hand lies on your shoulder ; an accidental jerk or stumble, and your lips would touch her brow or cheek ; and then the band hushes its strains, and you are once again strangers. No wonder youth prefers round dances !

The valse over, we passed into the conservatory, and thence issued on to the lawn,

where various other dancers were enjoying the balmy air, after the heat of the crowded tent. The summer moon was majestically rising in full glory above the dark tree-tops, and illumining with her silver rays the emerald sward. The evening star, large, mild, and lustrous, shone forth in the dark blue of heaven, and on its left lay a soft purple cloud tinged with lucid amber. A light breeze just stirred the leaves of the trees. It was indeed a scene well worthy of the brush of a Claude or a Stanfield. Behind us was Richmond-hill, bathed in the moonlight's voluptuous sheen; at our feet flashed the silver river, broken into a thousand diamond sparkles; in front of us were the gardens of the Lodge, lit up with variegated Chinese lamps pendent from triumphal arches, and laurel garlands that twined like serpents along the trees, uniting bough with bough; in the distance were the deserted

lists, now the vantage-ground of the London pyrotechnists, whose graceful art made the dark blue vault of heaven gleam with the rocket's fiery curve or the more elaborated 'piece;' and close at our side was the marquee with its crowded dancers and glittering costumes.

We gazed at the scene before us for some minutes without speaking.

'And you think you can be happy here for another three days?' asked Lady Trevennis, looking at me archly.

'So happy, that when I have to leave it, and afterwards all of you, I shall feel like Adam dismissed from Paradise. *Nessun maggior dolore che ricordarsi nel tempo felice!*' said I.

'I am very glad you have been happy with us during your stay; and your future will not have very much dolore in it, because there is every probability of an inspector-

ship of art being vacant, I hear, before the end of the next month.—How beautiful the moon looks !’

‘She does,’ said I, smiling; ‘but self-praise is no recommendation !’

‘Self-praise !’ replied she. ‘O, I forgot that in your eyes I was the moon.’

‘Yes, as yon moon is the queen of that fair scene above, so are you the queen of this fair scene below.’

A thick black cloud just now rolled over it and obscured its light, whilst I was speaking.

‘Were I superstitious, I should say that your comparison was a bad omen for me; see, the moon has been dethroned by yonder cloud, and completely hid.’

‘Only to burst upon us with renewed splendour; as you withdrew from us all for a time, only to appear again with increased brilliancy in your ball toilette,’ replied I.

But the dark cloud still enveloped the moon, and we saw its light no more.

‘Ah, your comparison does not hold good,’ said Lady Trevennis, laughing. ‘But look at that beautiful star; how it makes all others pale before it!’

‘Let me see whether I shall be more happy this time in my simile. Suppose I liken you to that star; see how it rises in the sky, distancing all others, and sailing in the deep blue alone! Now it has reached the highest point in the heavens.’

‘Yes; how bright it is! how soft and silvery its light! It certainly is the most beautiful gem in the diadem of heaven.’

‘And now it is just above your head, and seems to look upon you as if you were its sister star!’ said I.

‘Hail, fair sister!’ cried Lady Trevennis, turning her pale face with its deep wondrous eyes upward to the sky.


No sooner the greeting uttered, than the star shot rapidly across the heavens and fell in the east, and was no more seen.

‘Another bad omen!’ cried Lady Trevennis rather pettishly.

A voice behind us now timidly said :

‘I believe you are engaged to me, Lady Trevennis, for this dance—the Lancers?’

It was the Duke of Whistine; and the next minute I had the pleasure of seeing his Grace, who was as shy as a boy, or rather as shy as boys used to be, blush and stammer as he talked to Lady Trevennis preparatory to the commencement of the dance. And then, when the dance began, it was refreshing to see the Duke get very red in the face, set to the wrong partners, tread on Lady Trevennis’ dress, and apologise most profusely, while his fair partner smiled on him, as if she rather preferred than otherwise her train to be constantly stepped upon; and



again, in the grand chain, it was charming to see him shake hands with the wrong people, or perform graceful evolutions on his own account. Altogether, he did not acquit himself very creditably ; and I have no doubt that both he and his victim (I cannot call her his partner) were delighted when the dance was over.

The ball was merrily kept up till four in the morning, and then the guests retired, very well satisfied with the first day of the Tournament ; whilst those whose memory carried them back a few years vowed that it was as good as the Eglinton.





CHAPTER VII.

TO PARIS AND BACK.

‘Tell me, in sober truth, what is’t thou readest?’

IT was on the second day of the Tournament, as I was sitting in Moorpark, awaiting the commencement of a tilting match between Lord Arthur Joust and Captain Saraband, and whiling my time pleasantly away chatting with Mrs. De Brasse—a very pretty woman, whose conduct was considered by some severe matrons to be unbecoming a widow and a relict (for she was a great flirt, but withal very discreet)—that Lady Trevennis came up to us.

‘Pardon me, Mrs. De Brasse, but I wish to speak a few words to Mr. Disney.’

I was at her side at once.

‘Ay, marry! and by cock and pie what dost want with me, fair lady? By my hali-dom, I—’

‘I am in no mood for joking, Harry, just now. Come in here, for I want to speak to you very seriously;’ and we entered a long chamber hung with arras in which we had danced last night. Lady Trevennis was looking very pale and agitated, and the letter which she held in her hand trembled so, that I thought it would fall to the ground. We sat down. Lady Trevennis looked around to see that we were not observed; and finding we were safe from intrusion, said to me in a whisper,

‘I want you to start for Paris at once.’

‘At once?’

‘Yes, at once; the train leaves for Folkestone at two from Charing-cross, so you will be at Paris by midnight. Time is most



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‘Pardon me, Mrs. De Brasse, but I wish to speak a few words to Mr. Disney.’

I think not. And there is no necessity for your remaining at Paris after you have delivered the letters, unless you wish to do so. Let me see, this is Tuesday ; you can be back here on Thursday. Yes, perhaps it would be better for you to return as soon as you can, because I shall be anxious to learn how you have fared. You remember,' and she looked at me most penetratingly, 'what I said to you before—that this mission is a solemn secret between us, and that beyond our two selves no one must ever know anything whatever about it.'

'I have given you my most sacred word that it will never be divulged by me.'

'And when at Paris you will not ask anything about the errand you are sent upon?'

I also promised that ; 'and,' continued I, taking her small well-gloved hand, and pressing it to my lips, 'I swear it now by all that I hold most dear—and that is your-

self, as you well know—that never shall this mission that you have intrusted to me be divulged; and that no inducements whatever shall ever force me to betray the confidence that you have placed in me. There—will that satisfy you?”

‘Fully and perfectly.’

We had a little more conversation respecting the details of my journey, and then Lady T. rising, said, ‘And now I must be off to my guests. I am very sorry that it should so happen, that just at this very time—especially after the trouble you have had in preparing for the Tournament—it should be necessary for you to go.’

‘O, that makes no difference to me; besides, I flatter myself that by going on this errand for you, I am proving myself your *most* faithful knight.’

‘Indeed you are—far more faithful than yon young men, who fight sham duels with

long poles for the kerchief of the Queen of the Tournament,' said she, laughing.

'Well, that feeling, I can assure you, is quite enough compensation for missing all the fun here.'

'Lady Trevennis! Where's Lady Trevennis?' cried some voices outside.

'There, I must go now, and I advise you to follow my example. Don't waste time in making excuses to Mr. Faynix for your absence, for I have done that already. *Au revoir!* and *bon voyage!* I shall keep all my thanks till you come back, Harry!' were her last words to me, as she opened the door, and blew me a farewell kiss on her taper fingers.

I put the letters in my breast coat-pocket, and was about to quit the room, when I thought I saw a most suspicious-looking pair of boots protruding from beneath the arras. I walked quietly up to

where the boots appeared from, and pulling quickly aside the tapestry which concealed a door leading into a conservatory, discovered—Lord Edgeware!

I was so startled, that I could not say a word for some few seconds; but as soon as my astonishment had subsided it was succeeded by anger.

‘And so, Lord Edgeware, you have been playing the spy?’

‘The spy!’ said his lordship; ‘what the devil do you mean?’

‘Simply what I say—that you have been listening to a conversation between Lady Trevennis and me.’

‘Lady Trevennis! was she here?’

‘She was; and you have, as I have already said, played the spy upon us.’

‘Not at all, Mr. Disney,’ said he coolly. ‘I have simply an appointment here at one o’clock; and entering the room by the con-

servatory door, I hear a man's footsteps—your own—and therefore, not wishing that any one should see me, I prudently remain behind this medieval but highly convenient tapestry. And,' continued he, taking out his watch, 'unless you have any very strong attachment to this room, might I beg as a personal favour to me that you would kindly withdraw your presence, as I am expecting a lady every moment ?'

He was perfectly easy and self-possessed; and though I knew he lied as freely as a special correspondent in war time, yet there was an air of truth about him on this occasion that made me, in spite of myself, believe him.

'One question, if you please: how long were you behind the arras before I discovered you ?'

'About half a minute, I should think—at least you will be able to calculate the

time yourself when I tell you, that I opened the conservatory door at the very same moment that somebody—you say Lady Trevennis—went out of the room. The fact of our both opening the doors at the same time must have prevented you, I suppose, hearing me come in.'

'And you heard, on your honour as a peer, no details of the conversation between Lady Trevennis and me?'

'Really you are too impertinent—but anything to get rid of you. Yes, on my honour as a peer I heard nothing; and I did not, till you just told me, know that Lady Trevennis had been here at all. But I think I can guess the nature of the conversation that passed between you, though I did not, as you politely accuse me, act the spy.'


'Indeed?'

'Indeed,' said he sarcastically; 'I suppose that Lady Trevennis has simply in-

formed you that you may quit her service. I mean, that she can dispense with your intellectual superintendence over her son. She told me that you were going to leave her. But really, Mr. Disney, I trust that this conversation may not be prolonged: whenever we have had the pleasure of meeting, I think neither of us has ever desired that our interview should continue longer than necessary; and I trust that this occasion will prove no exception to the rule. I do not say we dislike each other, but the sympathy between us is—imperfect.’

Any farther conversation with him being useless, I thought it better to quit him at once; besides, it was high time for me to be preparing to start. I bowed coldly and left the room.

On my journey to Paris I frequently debated within myself whether his statement was true about not having heard anything



of the conversation. At times I believed him, and at others I doubted him; and so, hovering between faith and incredulity, my mind could arrive at no satisfactory conclusion about the matter. I determined, however, to tell Lady Trevennis of it the moment I returned (I had been unable to see her before I started). I hoped, as Lady Trevennis had stated no particulars respecting my mission, that even if Lord Edgeware *had* heard the details of our conversation, it would not much signify. On arriving at Paris I drove to the Mirabeau, and after an excellent supper went to bed, and soon fell asleep.

At twelve o'clock the next day I quitted my hotel, and at the end of half an hour arrived at the Bureau de ——— at the Tuileries. I desired to see the Marquis de ———, and was ushered upstairs into an ante-room. After waiting there a few moments a private secretary came in, who begged to know the

nature of my business. I handed him the letters Lady Trevennis had given me addressed to the Marquis de —, and stated that I had no doubt that as soon as Monsieur le Marquis had read their contents he would desire to see me. The secretary bowed and withdrew. At the end of ten minutes he again appeared, and said that the Marquis wished an interview with me. Would I follow him? He led me through a long corridor, and then stopped before some dark mahogany folding-doors, whose panels were lit up with gilding. He opened the door, and begged me to enter.

It was a long room overlooking the gardens of the Tuileries, and handsomely furnished. At a writing-table covered with despatches, letters, *livres jaunes*, and different large legal-looking volumes, sat a thin elderly man. He had a high benevolent forehead, bald as a billiard-ball, and dis-

playing very prominently the bumps of self-esteem and acquisitiveness; keen gray eyes very deeply set and shaded by thick eyebrows, a Hebrew type of nose, and a thick gray moustache and imperial. He was dressed in black, and over his small patent-leather boots were a pair of white linen gaiters. In his button-hole was the rosette of the Grand Cross.

‘Violà Monsieur, Monsieur le Marquis!’ said the secretary, introducing me.

‘You are the bearer of this?’ said the Marquis to me, holding up Lady Trevennis’ letter.

I said that I was.

‘Leave us, Champfleury,’ said the great man to the secretary; and when his command was obeyed, I was asked to sit down.

The Marquis was looking very pale and agitated.

‘You are the bearer of very momentous

news, Mr. ——' and then referring to the letter—'Mr. Disney; when did you arrive in Paris?'

'Last night, at about twelve.'

'I see you are a friend of Lady Trevennis?' said he, looking at me searchingly.

I replied that I was her son's tutor, and her father's secretary.

'Ah, she is a most charming woman, and her father a true friend to France! Pray present them my compliments when you return. I deeply regret that neither I nor Madame la Marquise was able to accept her kind invitation to the Tournament; but at the present moment all France is a tournament, and the *Corps Législatif* the jousting-ground. Our Queen of Beauty is Paris, and the knights who are contesting for her favours are Orleanists, Legitimists, Reds, and Imperialists.'

'But whilst you have such a King of

the Tournament, Monsieur, as your Emperor, all other competitors had better break their spears and retire.'

'I agree with you; but then, unfortunately, you cannot bring all people to adopt the same view, and least of all Frenchmen, who are, I am afraid, as fickle in politics as in love. But you have a despatch for his Majesty, have you not?—at least Lady Trevennis writes so.'

I handed him the long document which had been intrusted to me in London by her ladyship.

He took it gravely, and read the address.

'Excuse me for one moment,' said he, going to a small table where was a telegraphic apparatus, and sending off a message which took at least five minutes. 'I am afraid I must ask you to wait here for some little time, as it will be necessary for me to take this document to the Emperor, who is

at the farther end of the palace, and perhaps his Majesty may desire to see you. There is the *Times* of yesterday, the *Débats* of to-day; or would you prefer the *Figaro*, or some of these novels?' and he pointed to a batch of yellow-and-green-covered works that were lying on a map of Mexico on a chair at the end of the room. 'I shall return with all speed;' and bowing with that politeness which the French are supposed exclusively to possess, he quitted the room.

I thought I would while away the time by reading one of the novels; and whilst crossing the writing-table to get to the distant chair on which they had been ignominiously consigned, my eye fell upon Lady Trevennis' letter to the Marquis. In the hurry of the moment, the great man had taken another letter from off his table instead of the one written by Lady Trevennis. Let humble civil servants learn from this


that even their chiefs are occasionally forgetful.

Curiosity—that most unconquerable of all desires, when not controlled by principle or by honour—tempted me to look at the contents of her important letter. I regret to state, that at this time of my career my sense of honour was anything but keen: contact with society had so blunted it, that its edge seldom made itself felt against my conscience. Surrounded as I had been for the last few weeks by men who considered it quite *honourable* to be constantly untruthful with regard to their statements about the extent of their fortune or their high connections, or thought it perfectly fair and honest to defraud a tradesman, to sell unsound horses at good prices to their *friends*, to play cards and billiards with men notoriously their inferiors in the knowledge of the game, to practise all the dirty tricks of the turf or

other gentlemanlike accomplishments, which chiefly consisted in getting the most out of the innocent and the simple—such examples, I say, had not tended to improve my principles, which, since the fatal day that I had listened to the conversation between Lord Edgware and Lady Trevennis in the park at Coombe Royal, had been rapidly waning.


I bent over the table, and read deliberately the information contained in the letter I had been authorised to deliver—to deliver, too, on the solemn promise that I should not seek to acquaint myself with its contents. I read :

‘My dear Marquis de ——,—You may remember, three years ago, when wintering at Nice, I spoke to you about a M. Vaudrien, or Count Vaudrien as he styled himself, who was an object of suspicion to the Sardinian Government. Though suspected



of designs against the present dynasty of the Empire, nothing could be exactly proved against him ; and it was thought advisable that the Italian police should not openly interfere with him at that time, but merely content themselves with closely watching him. Being, as you know, a staunch adherent of his Imperial Majesty, and one of his political supporters in this country, I thought it my duty to interest myself in the affairs of this Vaudrien ; accordingly I placed the matter in the hands of one of our chief private detectives, who up to the present time has constantly been keeping him under strict *surveillance*.

‘ I have forwarded by Mr. Disney, the bearer of this letter, a connection of mine in whom I have the most implicit confidence, a full account of the private detective’s report, together with plans, photographs, &c., for the especial information of his Imperial Ma-




jesty and M. Piétri. It may, however, be advisable for me to give you a *résumé* of this report, and the following facts may perhaps assist you in your course of action :

‘From Nice the detective traced Vaudrien to Lyons, Bordeaux, Marseilles, Paris, and London. In all of these towns Vaudrien consorted with characters suspected by the police of entertaining hostile designs against his Imperial Majesty, but who, like himself, had not openly rendered themselves amenable to the law. Secret meetings were constantly held, either at low *estaminets* in the suburbs, or at the offices of those newspapers notoriously opposed to the present Government. What occurred at these meetings the detective was unable to discover, for everything was carried on by correspondence in cipher. At the commencement of this year Vaudrien, who seems never to have been in want of money, went to Paris

and started the newspaper the *Chevalier d'Industrie*, which has so often been prosecuted by the Government for its malicious libels and coarse innuendoes. Vaudrien was, however, quite content with merely starting this journal; for shortly after its first appearance he was traced to Liège, Sheffield, and finally to Birmingham. At Birmingham he has resided for the last two months. The detective now insinuated himself as a waiter into the hotel in which Vaudrien lived, and his special duty was to attend on the conspirator (the landlord of the hotel had been told by the detective the nature of his suspicions, and offered every facility and assistance in his power). What the detective here discovered was this:

‘Vaudrien had given himself out as a Brazilian engineer, employed by his government to contract with a well-known Birmingham firm for 10,000 shells, which were

propelled by air from a small tubular machine. As both the machine and shells were to be constructed on an entirely new and secret principle, the Brazilian Government desired that a small model should be first made, to carry from thirty to fifty yards, which would be examined by Brazilian engineers, and experiments tried with it in the war with Paraguay, to see how it would act. It appears that when the design was proposed to certain firms at Liége and Sheffield, they declined to undertake it on account of its impossibility of construction. The firm at Birmingham, however, consented to make the model, and were sanguine as to its success. I have enclosed to the Emperor a plan of the machine, which possesses two novel features—the shell explodes the moment it alights on the ground; and being propelled by air, there is no report attending its discharge. I need hardly




say, after this, what a dangerous and murderous missile it is.

‘During Vaudrien’s residence at Birmingham he constantly superintended the construction of the machine, and gave frequent dinners to friends, who he said were engineers, like himself. He wrote letters occasionally to men abroad ; but though they were perused by the detective, nothing of any importance was discovered till *last Friday*. On that day the detective posted for Vaudrien a letter addressed to M. Goloshe, Rue de Seine, Paris. This letter he read and made a copy of, which I have forwarded to his Majesty by Mr. Disney. Briefly it is this: that on next Friday evening’ (‘Gad ! that’s the day after to-morrow !’ exclaimed I), ‘as the Emperor, with the Empress and Prince Imperial, drive to the Opera, a shell will be discharged from this silent machine by Vaudrien and Goloshe (who have taken

rooms in a house opposite the private entrance to the Opera), which will alight exactly under the imperial carriage, and blow the whole of the party to atoms. The report of the explosion will be the signal for an insurrection in Paris, and the city will be at the mercy of the mob, who will proclaim a republic, assassinate many of the statesmen of the Empire, and demolish the Tuileries and the Senate. Risings will simultaneously occur at Lyons, Bordeaux, Marseilles, Brest, and other towns.

‘I have enclosed to the Emperor the number of the house facing the Opera in which the two conspirators are lodged, with plan; and also the names and addresses of the chief insurgents, who in the towns are awaiting the result of the explosion to place France in the hands of the extreme democrats, and overthrow the Empire.

‘You will get this intelligence by Wed-



nesday. Of course it is not for me to advise you in the slightest degree as to what plan of immediate procedure you should adopt; but I have to beg two things. *First*, that my name shall be most carefully preserved secret, and that *no one* beyond his Imperial Majesty and yourself is to know that I have had anything whatever to do in the matter. Vaudrien and Goloshe are only to be arrested on the general ground of "information received." I think you will see the advisability (if I am to continue my present duty as one of the agents of the Empire) of keeping my name from the public. The detective expects his services to be acknowledged, and will give evidence in the trial; but he has the strictest orders not to mention that I have been in any way connected with this matter. He takes the honour of tracing and discovering the plot entirely on himself. The second request I

have to make is, that Mr. Disney, the bearer of this document, is to know nothing of the nature of the mission on which he is sent. I have no special reason for making this latter request, but I think it better that he should remain ignorant.'

The remaining part of the letter was in cipher until the signature, which was merely 'T.' The letter had no date or address.

I remained standing before this precious document in deep reflection. 'What had Vaudrien to do with Lady Trevennis? Why had he written constantly to her, and once (or oftener, for aught I knew) visited her? Why did she mix herself up in the case, and not leave it in the hands of the police? Because she was one of the Emperor's agents? Hardly; for if she had placed the matter in the charge of the detective, that would have been all that was required of

her. She must have had some other reason than a purely political one to be so keen after this man. But what other reason is a mystery. Ah! I hear footsteps!' and walking quietly to the chair on which the novels were placed, I seized one, and seating myself at the window-sill overlooking the Tuileries, began to read.

But the footsteps passed along the corridor, and I was left undisturbed in my reflections and the enjoyment of my novel. I had remained at least ten minutes perusing Lady Trevennis' letter (fortunate that I had not been interrupted!); and it must have been after another ten minutes' solitary confinement in the statesman's room that I heard the door opened. The Marquis entered, looking agitated, and scanned my face very inquisitively. I rose up from my chair, calm and self-possessed, and inquired whether his Majesty desired to see me.

‘I am afraid I must ask you to remain here a little longer, for I have not yet seen his Majesty;’ and he took hold of Lady Trevennis’ letter, eyeing me very searchingly the while. But I bore his scrutiny with perfect ease, and smilingly said that I was quite prepared to wait as long as M. le Marquis wished.

‘I hope to return in half an hour,’ said he, quitting the room.

Again I was left alone with my novel. I forget its title, but I know I had time to skim it right through; and I had just arrived at the last chapter, where the gallant, after seducing his friend’s wife, falls in the duel with the husband, and dies on the ground; or, as the novelist described it, ‘the poison of death distilled slowly through the veins of the expiring Lovelace for a few moments, and then, with a gentle murmur of “Laura! Laura!” the dying man’s soul

winged its flight to heaven !' (Odd ideas the French have of heaven !) I had just read this, when the Marquis entered.

'There will be no necessity for his Majesty to see you,' said the minister; 'but I am desired to express his thanks to Lady Trevennis, which you will be good enough to convey to her ladyship. The Emperor or I will write shortly to Lady Trevennis upon this grave matter. I believe you are unacquainted with the nature of the mission on which you have been sent?' asked he, looking at me keenly.

'Perfectly. Lady Trevennis thought there was no occasion for me to know it, and indeed made me promise that I should not seek to enlighten my ignorance by asking questions,' I replied simply.

'Very well. Would you give me your address, for his Majesty has desired the Duc

de Bassano to send you a card for the state ball here to-morrow night.'

I was charmed at the prospect; for I had hoped that his Imperial Majesty might have wished to see me, and so have enabled me to write an article in the newspapers on my return to England. 'The Emperor Interviewed, or Tittle-tattle from the Tuileries' would have been a glorious heading; and then it would have had the additional advantage of being true, which would certainly at the time have been a novelty. But still here was another splendid opportunity offered me of portraying imperial life. 'The Empress *chez elle*, or a State Ball at the Tuileries;' what a capital article for the *Mixtus barbarus*! Couldn't be better! I bowed my thanks for the honour conferred on me by the invitation, and gave the minister my address.

'You stay long in Paris?' asked he.

‘I had no intention of remaining over to-morrow; but since I have the honour of being invited to the ball, I shall remain a day or two longer, and perhaps return to England on Monday. It is my first visit to Paris, and I am glad of the opportunity of seeing its beauties.’

‘It is a city unrivalled in the world. Paris is the queen of cities, as France is the queen of nations. My remark does not offend you?’

‘Not the slightest, M. le Marquis. I am sure I am only expressing the views of my country when I say that we in England look upon your capital as the centre of civilisation, and the judgment of Paris is in every case unquestioned by us. We follow your fashions with an imitation almost servile; we purloin your dramas, and bring them out as “new and original;” we think nothing of a *prima donna* till we know

how Paris has received her *début*; a cook is not a cook till he has graduated in Paris and, in short, everything that comes from the "gay city" is accepted by us without hesitation or farther examination.'

'You flatter us, Mr. Disney. But it would be absurd in me to depreciate France or Paris.'

'And especially to an Englishman,' said I, laughing; 'for surely no people ever paid such attention to the dictates of *la grande nation* as my countrymen. When France smiles on us, our commerce flourishes, and we are all bright and happy. But let her frown upon us, and our hearts fall as low as our shares, and we immediately man our Martello towers, and write letters about the Volunteers. Our national defences, you know, are our great *forte*,' added I, smiling.

'But happily,' smiled the statesman self-complacently, 'England and France are the

best of friends, and it is our interest to remain so. The Crimea has washed out Waterloo. Ah, what would England have done there without us !'

'What would she indeed !' thought I. 'When we had gained the day, France always came to our assistance, and shared the victory.'

I replied to his remark, that England was perfectly aware of the debt of gratitude she owed to France.

'Yes,' said the statesman, looking at a map of Europe in which France was painted light green, and included the Rhenish Provinces, Belgium, and part of Holland ; 'England and France must ever be allies, and the world will tremble before us.'


'I fear it would take a good deal to make Prussia tremble ; she seems so vain-glorious about her projected unity of Germany,' said I.

‘Yes, Prussia is arrogant; but her ambition will one day overreach itself, and tumble on the other side.’

‘Not of the Rhine, I hope—not into Alsace and Lorraine,’ I said, smiling.

‘I think not,’ said the statesman drily, and in a tone which expressed the most profound contempt for the Germans. ‘But Prussia must be prevented from accomplishing her ideas of a united Fatherland. Germany united, what would be the result? She would ally herself with Russia, exchange the Polish provinces for the provinces on the Baltic, take the German provinces from Austria, absorb Denmark, and defy the world. No! England and France must prevent this!’ he said, with sparkling eyes and flushed cheeks.

‘If intervention on paper,’ said I, ‘will be of any service to France, England will be a most useful ally. We are famous for



our long despatches about other people's business, and for our short memories about what we promise. My only fear is, that lately Europe has been so accustomed to see us hold up our finger in a threatening attitude, and then quietly put it down again when intimidation is useless, that Prussia may say, "O, it's only England! she only talks, and never does anything, except to show how well she eats humble pie." So that what our Secretary for the Confusion of Foreign Affairs were to say would perhaps only be listened to with the deference paid to a third-rate power.'

'But we must both show that we are prepared to support our views, and to enforce our conditions, if necessary, by proceeding to extremities,' exclaimed the minister.

'England, sir,' replied I dogmatically, 'is prepared to do only one thing, and that

is, to preserve her commerce at all risks. Our national pride means our exports and imports on the increase, and our national honour our commercial prosperity. Touch these, and England is wounded in her most sensitive parts; spare these, and she is invulnerable. In England we obey but one law—the law of merchants. As Napoleon said, we are but a “nation of shopkeepers,” and our honour, talents, and energies have but one aim in view—to mind the shop.’

The minister was about to reply, when two gentlemen entered his room, and I bowed and took my departure.

I went off to the Station du Nord immediately, and dispatched a telegram to Lady Trevennis, saying that I had delivered her letters, and intended to remain in Paris till Monday. On quitting the station, the tidal train from Calais had just arrived, and issuing from a first-class carriage I noticed


Lord Edgware's valet. The fellow recognised me, and looked at me impertinently. 'What the deuce is he doing here?' said I to myself, as I walked back to my hotel.

In the afternoon, as I was mooning about Paris, I turned on to the boulevards, and was struck by the air of astonishment and excitement that nearly everybody possessed. The kiosks were crowded by persons anxious to buy papers, and the little *gamins* were running about, crying, 'Plot to assassinate the Emperor! Discovery of the conspirators! Risings suppressed in Lyons!' &c. I bought the *Patrie*, and read a long sensational article headed 'Another Plot against the Emperor,' which stated that, thanks to the vigilance of M. Piétri and his myrmidons, two conspirators were seized in lodgings opposite to the private entrance of the Opera, who had conceived a foul plot to murder the imperial family, by throwing from a

new kind of infernal machine a shell which would explode under the carriage of the Emperor on his arrival at the Opera. Papers were also discovered, implicating some thirty people who were bent on the overthrow of the Empire, and had organised risings in Lyons, Bordeaux, &c., to break out as soon as the Emperor had become their victim. The prisoners on being captured made no defence, but seemed utterly paralysed with astonishment at being discovered. They were secured at once, and marched off to prison. It is expected that they will be brought up to trial next week, along with their various accomplices in the provinces. The *Patrie* then gave a long description of Vaudrien, whom they evidently regarded as the important man in the conspiracy; and concluded by hoping that sentence of death would be passed upon him, *pour encourager les autres*.

During the three days I was at Paris nothing was talked of but the trial. The Emperor was loudly cheered when he appeared on the boulevards, and prayers were offered up for his deliverance at the Madeleine and at Notre Dame. I regretted that I had to leave Paris at such an exciting time, for I should have liked to have witnessed the trial; but I had received a letter from Lady Trevennis desiring me to return as soon as possible, as Mr. Faynix wanted my services, and it was therefore unadvisable my remaining longer away.

I returned home by the morning tidal train *viâ* Dover, and had the pleasure of being seated in a carriage with a very distinguished person during the journey from Paris to Calais. He was a short thick-set man, with a bald head, small eyes, snub nose, large mouth, big ears, and a chin beard. He was dressed in shiny black, and pro-



fusely adorned with jewelry: a big diamond ring blazed on his short stumpy forefinger. With the reticence peculiar to men of his stamp, he at once began the conversation.

‘Fine city Parry, sir?’

‘Very fine.’

‘Seems that the hempress ’as ’ad a hawful hescape of being hushed into heternity?’

‘A very narrow escape indeed,’ said I, for I did not care to talk, having quite enough food for reflection in thinking of what had occurred during the last few days.

‘Hengland better ponder hover the hevent, and take the hexample to ’eart, sir.’

‘England? why, what has she to do with it?’ asked I, astonished.

‘A great deal, sir. Hassassination is the fate which hawaits hall hempires. We live in times of progress, sir; royalty is hall ’umbug and a hobsolete hanachronism. A re-

public is the gal for my money,' said the little man with a stern smile.

'You are a republican, then?' I asked.

'I ham, and glories in the cognomen. Hancient Hathens was a republic till Julius Cæsar made 'er a monarchy, and so was Spartan Rome till Socrates made 'isself a triumvir. We know, we who 'ave studied 'istory, 'ow glorious were their hannels till they became monarchies. The hantiquity of the past should be the hexample of the future. Hengland in a few years will be a republic, and no longer the slave of an hef-fete haristocracy and himmoral principles.'

'Would you wish, then, to overthrow all the glorious institutions of your country, and—' began I, banteringly, for I always humour a fool in his folly.

'Hinstitooshuns be damn'd! What, in 'eaven's name, are hour hinstitooshuns? Do you call these hour hinstitooshuns: a Sove-

reign who is a nonentity; a 'Ouse of Lords that's a registrar's office; a 'Ouse of Commons composed of only the wealthier horders; a ministry that does nothink but reverse the acts of its predecessors, and makes appointments for itself and children; a church that don't know what it teaches, but goes to law once in four-and-twenty hours with its curates, who kick up doose's own delight among themselves, and larf at their bishops—a pack of drivelling old women who ought to be put to wash their lawn sleeves, for they ain't fit for anythink else? Hinstitooshuns indeed !'

‘ Well, fire ahead and see what else we’ve got to be proud of.’

‘ A Privy Council that don’t counsel; a heap of Judges, honest men enough, but who charge such a lot before you can speak to them that a poor man ain’t able to go to law; a Harmy governed by a horfice which

confooses all our milingtary establishments, hincreases our expenditure, and keeps everything—ha ! ha !—in *pêle mêle* ; a Navy hill disciplined and always getting hout of hor-der, and hinto foreign ports where they ain't wanted, and never into ports where they *is* ; a Civil Service that ain't civil ; Poor-law guardians that don't guard ; in short, nothink that does anythink, and everythink that nowadays *does* somethink ought to be quiet and do nothink. But me and my mates are going to change all this. Permit me ;' and he gave me a card. ' Hope we'll see you amongst us some evening, sir ?'

It was a small green card, on which was written in large black letters, 'Confraternity of Cadgers. Important meeting to be held on Friday next, July 10th, 18—, outside St. Martin's Wash-house, Trafalgar-square. Mr. Lowe Jinks in the chair. Various political questions will be discussed ; among

them, "Is not the equal distribution of wealth, especially among those who have nothing, an advisable policy to recommend to the Government?"

'Brothers Measely and Kattsmete will also address the meeting.

'Chair to be taken at 10 o'clock P.M.'

'I am Mr. Kattsmete, sir,' said the little cad consequentially, and pointing to his name on the card.

'Are you? Congratulate you. Permit me to recommend one suggestion: instead of meeting outside St. Martin's Wash-house, meet inside, and commence your discussions on reform by urging the necessity of physical ablutions among the lower orders,' said I drily.

'Sir, you are himpertinent! You are no gentleman! There!' exclaimed Brother Kattsmete angrily.

'I am not,' I replied quietly: 'in these

days, when the name is so common, it is a mark of distinction not to lay claim to it. As I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance either socially or politically, may I beg that you will permit me to read my paper without farther interruption ?

The man murmured some not very complimentary remark (‘Hignorant hass!’ I think), and left me alone till we arrived at Calais, when I lost sight of him.

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